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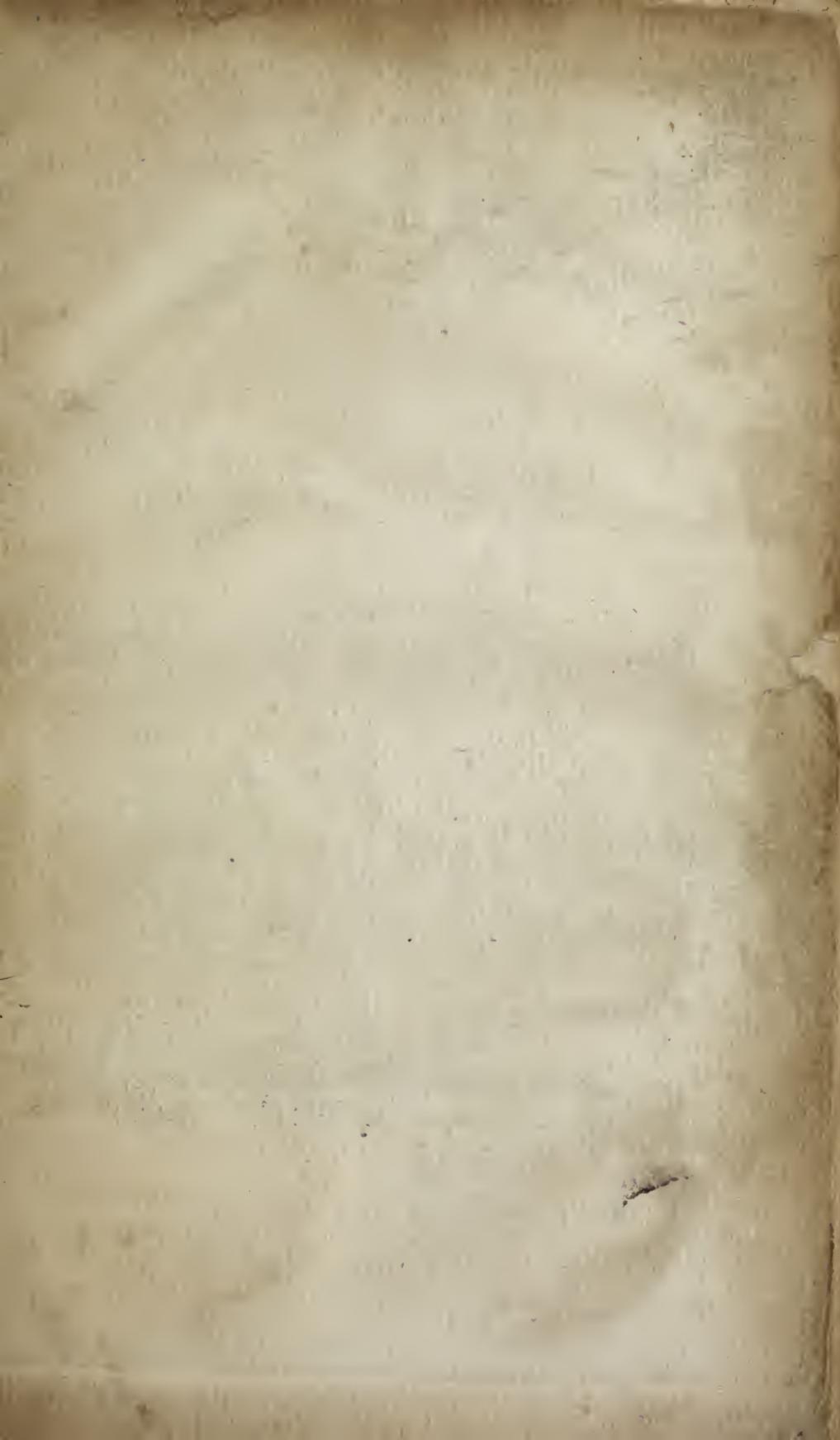
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G. Vander Gucht Inv. & Sculp.

Shakespear, Rowe, Johnson, now are quite undon  
These are thy Tryumphs, thy Exploits O Lun!

Theophilus Cibber,  
TO  
DAVID GARRICK, *Efq;*  
WITH  
DISSERTATIONS  
ON  
THEATRICAL SUBJECTS.

I. Of Poets and Actors, their Antiquity, and Estimation; — particularly among the Greeks and Romans: — Acting of Plays encouraged by the greatest Men in all Ages.

II. Soerates, Epaminondas, Cæsar, Scipio, Brutus, Cicero, &c. Promoters of Dramatic Compositions, Encouragers of Actors, &c.

III. The Apostles no Enemies to Plays: Quotations from Holy Writ, and of some modern Divines in their Favour. History of Patents and Licences, from Queen Elizabeth's Time to the present, chiefly granted in Favour of the Actors.

IV. Good Conduct of Patentees: Pantomimes exploded; — the ill Usage of Authors considered.

V. Some new and revived Pieces reviewed. The new Manner of Acting pointed out. An Account of Drolls, Farces, mock Opera's, &c. Extracted from Shakespear's mutilated and macerated Remains, by the Little Charlatan of the present Stage.

VI. The Rehearsal versed, — Mimicry an Abuse; Specimens of modern genteel Comedy. Ditto of modern Tragedy.

VII. The new Manner of acting the Chances, — and the Morals of that Play enquired into.

VIII. Seneca, — Callipedes, — and a reigning Actor, compared. The Cause of Spouters, &c.

Shakespear, Rowe, Johnson, now are quite undone,  
These are they Triumphs, thy Exploits, O LUN!

---

Adorn'd with a *Frontispiece*, and curious *Copper-Plates*.

---

L O N D O N:

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MDCCLIX.

# Georgian Poetry

Edited by George H. Ford

Volume 1: 1700-1750: The Beginnings

Volume 2: 1750-1800: The Golden Age

Volume 3: 1800-1850: The Decline and Fall

Volume 4: 1850-1900: The Revival and Renaissance

Volume 5: 1900-1950: The Twentieth-Century Poets

Volume 6: 1950-1970: The New Poets and the New Poetry

Volume 7: 1970-1990: The Final Years and the Final Poets

Volume 8: 1990-2000: The Millennium Poets

Volume 9: 2000-2020: The Future Poets and the Future Poetry

Volume 10: 2020-2040: The Final Poets and the Final Poetry

Volume 11: 2040-2060: The Final Poets and the Final Poetry

Volume 12: 2060-2080: The Final Poets and the Final Poetry



C I B B E R's  
DISSERTATION  
ON THE  
THEATRES.

FIRST DISSERTATION.

**D**RAMATICK Compositions have ever been esteem'd among the greatest Productions of human Genius, and the acting of 'em, has, by some of the wisest, and best Men, in all Ages, been countenanced, as highly serviceable to the Cause of Virtue.

— Example is the strongest Manner of enforcing Precept; and a Stage Representation (rightly conducted) the best Picture of Nature. — In this humanising and instructing Academy, the young Man may learn the Manners of the World, without running through the Perils of it.

As Pleasure is the Pursuit of the greatest Part of Mankind, all well regulated States have judged it proper, in a political and moral Sense, to have some publick Exhibitions, for the Entertainment of the Many. --- What Pleasure so rational, as that proceeding from a well wrote, and well acted Tragedy or Comedy, --- where the Mind may have at once its Fill of Improvement, and Delight?

Thus thought the *Grecians*, the *Romans* copy'd them, and all the polite Nations of *Europe* have receiv'd and cultivated the Dramatic Art. --- In this our *British Islands* have been most eminent; --- *England*, *Scotland*, and *Ireland*, have produc'd admirable Actors, and excellent Authors, both in the Comic and Tragic Stile; and sometimes, noble Patrons, who have done Honour to them-

themselves by becoming the Friends and Protectors of Men of Genius. ---

Nor was the Stage ever totally overthrown, but by a Set of gloomy-minded Men, whose melancholy, mischievous, perturbed Spirits, were ne'er at rest, 'till wickedly they broke thro' our Laws, wounded our Constitution in its tenderest Parts, degraded our Peers, and our Prelates, trampled on the Mitre, pull'd down the Crown, and, shocking to Remembrance ! struck off the Royal Head that wore it. ---

I need not here acquaint the Learned, at what Expence the *Athenians* supported their Theatres, nor point out how often, from among their Poets, they chose Governors of their Provinces, Generals of their Armies, and Guardians of their Liberties.

--- Who were more jealous of their Liberties than the *Athenians*? Who better knew that Corruption and Debauchery are the great Antidotes of Liberty? --- Who better knew, than they, that the Freedom of the Theatre (next to that of the Senate) was the best Support of Liberty, --- against

all the undermining Arts of those who wickedly might seek to sap its Foundation ?

“ How came (says a living Author) the “ *Athenians* to lay out an Hundred Thou-“ sand Pounds upon the Decorations of one “ single Tragedy of *Sophocles* ? Not sure, as “ it was merely a Spectacle for Idleness, or “ Vacancy of Thought, to gaze at, but be-“ cause it was the most rational, most in-“ structive, and delightful Composition, that “ human Wit had yet arrived at, and conse-“ quently, the most worthy to be the Enter-“ tainment of a wise and warlike Nation : “ --- And it may still be a Question, --- “ Whether this publick Spirit inspired *Sopho-  
cles*, or, whether *Sophocles* inspired this “ publick Spirit ? ”

The divine *Socrates* assisted *Euripides*, in his Compositions --- The wise *Solon* fre-  
quented Plays, even in his Decline of Life ; and, *Plutarch* informs us, he thought Plays useful, to polish the Manners, and instill Principles of Virtue. --- The *Grecian* States were all Encouragers of Plays. Nay, *Epa-  
minondas*, who, 'tis said, was rarely observ'd to laugh, was an Encourager of Comedies.

--- As

---As Arts and Sciences encreas'd in *Rome*, when Learning, Eloquence, and Poetry flourish'd, *Lelius* improv'd his social Hours with *Terence*; a *Scipio* thought it not beneath him to enjoy the polite, the pleasing Party:--- Then triumph'd Wit indeed.

Mighty *Cæsar*, who gave Laws to *Rome*, was an excellent Poet as well as Orator; he thought the former Title an Addition to his Honour, --- and ever mention'd *Terence* and *Menander* with Respect.

His Successor, *Augustus*, found it easier to make himself Sovereign of the World, than to write a good Tragedy:--- He began a Play, called *Ajax*, but cou'd not finish it.

*Brutus*, the virtuous, the moral *Brutus*, thought his Time not misemploy'd in a Journey from *Rome* to *Naples*, only to see an excellent Troop of Comedians; and was so pleas'd with their Performance, he sent 'em to *Rome*, with Letters of Recommendation to *Cicero*, to take 'em under his Patronage: --- This too was at a Time when the City was under no small Confusion from the Murder of *Cæsar*; yet, 'midst the Tumults of those Times, and the Hurry of

his own Affairs, he thought the having a good Company of Actors of too much Consequence to the Publick to be neglected.--- And in such Estimation was *Roscius* held by *Cicero*, that in pleading the Cause of the Poet *Archias*, he makes honourable Mention of that Actor, and emphatically and affectionately says,--- " Who of us was so brutish " of Temper, or hard of Heart, as not to " feel the tenderest Emotions from the " Death of *Roscius*? True---he died old--- " But, methinks, for the Excellence and " Beauty of his Art, he merited to be ex- " empt from Death."

In the Days of *Augustus*, when Dramatic Entertainments were the common publick Diversions of the People through all the Provinces of that spacious Empire, --- Had they been deem'd immoral, cou'd they have pass'd uncensur'd by all our Apostles, who at that Time went forth by Divine Command to convert all Nations? --- No Vice, no Impiety escaped them; not only crying Sins provok'd their Censure,---they even reprov'd the Indecencies of Dress, and Indelicacies of Behaviour.--- In many Places they must cer-  
tainly

tainly met with many Theatres --- But we hear not of any one Poet or Actor who received any Reprimand from them.

The Holy Scripture furnishes us with no Argument against Plays ; on the contrary, we find Quotations there in Favour of them. --- The Text of St. *Paul*, “ Evil Communication corrupts good Manners,” was an Expression of the Comic Poet *Menander*, near three hundred Years before : The Apostle adopting this Sentiment, shews Dramatic Poetry lay not under Gospel Censure.

Wou’d St. *Paul*, one of the most learn’d of the Apostles, have incorporated a noted Saying of a Heathen Poet into the Gospel (however moral the Expression might be) if Plays had been deem’d criminal, --- or had been thought Entertainments unworthy Christian Auditors ?

A further Instance of his Respect for Dramatic Poets, we find in the 28th Verse of the 17th Chapter of *Acts* ; --- “ In him we live and move, and have our Being, as certain of your own Poets have said, for we are also his Offspring.” —

Again, in his 12th Verse of the first Chapter of his Epistle to *Titus*, --- he uses the Words of *Epimenides* the Poet, when he says, " One of themselves, even a Prophet of their own, said, the *Cretans* are always Liars."

Thus, while the Apostle speaks in the Words of the Poets, does he not vindicate the Usefulness and Innocence of the Drama ?

To come nearer our own Times, --- Did not the truly pious and learned Archbishop *Tillotson*, speaking of Plays, say, --- " They might be so fram'd and govern'd by such Rules, as not only to be innocently diverting, but instructive and useful, to put some Follies and Vices out of Countenance, which cannot perhaps be so decently reprov'd, nor so effectually expos'd and corrected, any other Way."

Nay, that inveterate Enemy of the Stage, *Collier*, --- allows, as an undeniable Truth, --- " That the Wit of Man cannot invent any Thing more conducive to Virtue, and destructive of Vice, than the Drama."

A learned Divine justly observes  
 " A Verse may find him who a Sermon flies,  
 " And turn Delight into a Sacrifice."

From Queen Elizabeth's Time, to the breaking out of that unnatural Rebellion in 1641, the Number of Play-houses were seldom less than Eight, and sometimes double that Number; tho' London and Westminster were then scarcely a tenth Part so large as at present; and the Frequenters of Theatres are now increased an hundred Fold.

Every Theatre then had its particular Patrons, among the Nobility; and the Stage in general, was thought worthy the Encouragement of that glorious Prince: This appeared in the Countenance, Favour, and Protection, she gave to all the Sons of the Muses, especially the Dramatic Poets. Then a Fletcher, Johnson, and Shakespear, arose, and enriched the Stage with their admirable Compositions: --- A Queen patroniz'd them, --- her Nobles follow'd the great Example: --- A Southampton at one Time, made a Present of One Thousand Pounds to his honoured

honoured Friend *Shakespear*: --- A Gift then equal to five Times that Sum now.

In these, and some following Reigns, such Honours were done to Dramatic Compositions, that the noblest Personages of the Court, nay crowned Heads, have thought it no Impeachment of their Honour, or good Sense, not only to become Spectators, but were Performers in many Plays and Masques, acted at Court; to decorate which no Expence was spared,

In *Rhymer's Fædera* we find a Copy of a Licence, under the Privy-Seal, granted by King *James* the First, for the establishing and supporting a Company of Comedians, not only in *London* but in any Part of *England*: --- Which Grant was made to *Cowley, Armyn, Sly, Condel, Hemings, Phillips, Burbage, Fletcher*, and the immortal *Shakespear*: These were all Actors, and several of 'em Poets: --- A sensible, honourable, and happy Junction.

During that Reign, and Part of King *Charles* the First's, the Theatres were encouraged; then Poets and Actors reaped the Harvest of their own Labours. --- 'Till Puritanism

ritanism prevailed, when with much Zeal, and little Knowledge, they began their Attacks on the Stage ; and, in a heavy Load of dull Abuse, licentiously libelled all the Encouragers of Plays, of what Degree soever \*.

Soon after the Restoration, the Theatres again revived, and two Patents were granted by King *Charles the Second*, one to form a Company, to be called the King's, the other the Duke's : --- They were severally granted to Sir *William Davenant*, and Mr. *Killigrew*. --- But both these Patentees found it prudent to take some principal Actors into Shares with them.

Accordingly Mr. *Mohun*, Mr. *Hart*, Mr. *Kynaston*, and other Actors, became Partners with Mr. *Killigrew* ; --- as did Mr. *Betterton*, Mr. *Smith*, Mr. *Harris*, Mr. *Underhill*, and others, with Sir *William Davenant*.

But these Patents became afterwards branched out into different Hands, and were purchased in Parcels, by the Indolent and Ignorant, who so oppressed the Actors, that on their just Complaints made to the

Earl

\* See an Account of *Pryne*, &c. in the Appendix.

Earl of *Dorset*, then Lord Chamberlain, he not only heard, but redressed their Grievances: He took the most effectual Method for their Relief. --- The Learned of the Law were advised with, who then (as many have since) gave it as their Opinion, that if acting of Plays were *malum in se* (was in itself criminal) no Royal Sanction ought, or could, protect them; --- but, as neither Law, nor Common Sense, had ever deemed 'em so, --- Patents, and Licences, were thought proper Grants from the Crown: And that no Patent, from any former King, could tie up the Hands of a succeeding Prince from granting the like Authorities.

On this Representation, King *William*, of glorious Memory, granted a Licence to Mess. *Betterton, Kynaston, Dogget, Bowman, Underhill, Mrs. Barry, Mrs. Bracegirdle*, and others, to form a Company, and act for themselves.

And a voluntary Subscription was soon raised to build 'em a Theatre, --- which they opened, on *Easter-Monday, 1695*, with that admirable Comedy (then a new one) called *Love for Love*. --- There they continued

tinued about ten Years, till a Licence from Queen *Anne*, being granted to Sir *John Vanbrugh*, and Mr. *Congreve*, ---- these 'forementioned Actors were influenced, by Hopes of large Rewards, to act under these new Managers; --- But, in two Seasons, those Gentlemen, tho' Men of great Parts, Wit, and Sense, --- from their Inexperience, and Want of Knowledge in the various Branches of Stage Management, soon found themselves disappointed, not only in their flattering Prospects of Gain, but were unable to make good their Contracts.

Then the late Mr. *Swinny* agreed with Sir *John* for the Use of his House, Cloaths, Scenes, &c. at a certain Rent; --- this was no sooner effected, but the Actors flew from their ignorant Tyrant of *Drury-lane*, (who had got the Patents, by unaccountable Methods, into his Hands) and played under Mr. *Swinny*, who took Mr. *Wilks*, Mr. *Cibber*, and Mr. *Dogget*, into the Management with him. The Theatre again revived, and the Actors began to know the Sweets of being honestly and regularly paid their Due.

Due. I have heard several who acted in that Company declare, they, in one Season, received Two Hundred Days Pay.

The Royal Patents being again sold out in several Parcels, became the Property of Gentlemen who were too much attached to their Pleasures, to allow so much Time, and Attention, as was necessary for carrying on the Business of the Theatre. --- The Patents being united, the Proprietors of 'em, to save themselves Trouble, deputed an Agent to act for them. He was, perhaps, one of the most dull, yet cunning Mortals, that ever by Stupidity spoiled a good Project, -- or, by Craft, and Chicanery, got the better of unguarded Men of superior Parts.

Mr. *Cibber*, Senior, in his Apology, observes, that " This good Master was as fly a Tyrant as ever was at the Head of a Theatre ; for he gave the Actors more Liberty, and fewer Days Pay, than any of his Predecessors ; he wou'd laugh with 'em over a Bottle, and bite 'em in their Bargins ; he kept them poor, that they might not be able to rebel ; and, sometimes merely, that they might not think of it "

" This

“ This was the Net the Actors danced in  
 “ for several Years ; but, no Wonder the Ac-  
 “ tors were Dupes, while their Master was a  
 “ Lawyer ;” and he often shew’d the Proprie-  
 tors (who entrusted him with the Manage-  
 ment of their Patent) that he knew enough of  
 the wrong Side of the Law to lead ’em a  
 long Chace in Chancery, for many Years to-  
 gether. --- Thus did he perplex, and em-  
 broil their Affairs, ’till he tir’d ’em out, ---  
 and got the Power into his own Hands :

There being then but one Company, the  
 Actors found themselves all reduced in their  
 Salaries (low enough before) and an In-  
 dulto was laid of one Third of the Profits of  
 their Benefits, for the Use of the Patentee.

These, and other his repeated Acts of In-  
 justice, and stupid Tyranny, made the Actors  
 join in a Body to appeal for Redress to the  
 then Lord Chamberlain.

They again were heard, and again found  
 Redress ; --- an Order came from that Of-  
 fice to silence the Patentee, and to supersede  
 his Power : --- The Authority of the Patentee

no longer subsisting, the confederate Actors walked out of the House; to which they never returned 'till they became Tenants and Masters of it.

However, this cunning Shaver, having once made himself sole Monarch of the Theatrical Empire, at his Death left the quiet Possession of that Power to his Son. ---

After the Supersedeas of the Patent, the Power of acting Plays was, by a Court Licence, and a Court Interest, shifted into different Hands, during the latter Part of Queen *Anne's* Reign. --- But the nominal Director (appointed by the Court) leaving the Management thereof intirely to Messrs. *Wilks, Cibber, and Dogget*, contented himself with the Certainty of receiving an annual Income of Seven Hundred Pounds. No inconsiderable Stipend for doing nothing.

On the happy Accession of his Majesty King *George* the First to the Crown of *Great-Britain*, Sir *Richard Steele* obtained a Patent, as Governor of His Majesty's Company of Comedians, and Messrs. *Wilks, Cibber, and Booth*, were made joint Directors, and Sharers with him: --- During

--- During their Administration (which lasted near Twenty Years) the Business of the Stage was so well conducted, that Authors, Actors, and Managers, had never enjoyed more mutual Content, or a more general Prosperity.

“ Then it was, that the polite World, by their decent Attention, their sensible Taste, and their generous Encouragement of Authors, and Actors, shew’d, that the Stage, under a due Regulation, was capable of being, what the wisest Ages thought it might be, the most rational Scheme that human Wit could form, to dissipate with Innocence the Cares of Life; to allure, even the Turbulent, or Ill-disposed, from worse Meditations; and to give the leisure Hours of Business, and Virtue, an instructive Recreation.” Then Authors were treated like Gentlemen, --- and Actors with Humanity. --- Those Managers never discharged an Actor, unless his total Neglect of their Business compelled them to it: --- The Actor then, who, through Sickness, Accident, or Age, became an Invalid, still enjoyed his Salary, --- nay, had his Benefit in Turn, nor dreaded Poverty being added to

his other Misfortunes :---Of this Benevolence and Generosity they gave many Instances.

The Patent granted to Sir *Richard Steele* was for his Life, and to his Assigns for three Years after. He died in the Year 1729. In the Year 1732, a new Patent was granted to Mess. *Cibber*, *Wilks*, and *Booth*; soon after, Mr. *Booth* (whose unhappy Illness had for some Years past deprived the Stage of one of its chief Ornaments) sold a Moiety of his Share:--- Not long after, the Stage suffer'd an irreparable Loss, by Mr. *Wilks*'s quitting that and Life together:--- His Widow took a nominal Partner into her Share:--- I farm'd Mr. *Cibber* Senior's Share 'till he sold it.

Towards the End of that Season, Mr. *Booth* died.--- As the Merits of Mr. *Wilks* and Mr. *Booth* were universally admired, no Wonder their Loss was universally lamented:--- They left the judicious Lovers of the Theatre in Despair of seeing their Equals.

Looking over this Theatre \*, in order to prepare it for the Reception of my honourable Auditors, the Motto *Conabimur*, now placed over my Head, caught my Eye, and brought

\* The little Theatre in the *Hay-market*, where this Dissertation was first deliver'd.

brought to my Remembrance the Time and the Occasion of my first placing it there.

'Twas in the Month of *September*, in the memorable Year 1733, --- myself, and a large Body of Comedians, found a happy Assylum in this little Theatre, protected by a generous Town, against the despotic Power of some petulant, capricious, unskilful, indolent, and oppressive Patentees; --- at that Juncture, a Patent, granted as a Reward to Actors of Merit, by being privately stockjobb'd, became the Property of some who prov'd by the Event they had more Money than Knowledge of what they trafick'd for. --- The Actors, who chose not such unskilful Governors, and who reasonably suppos'd they cou'd guide themselves, had taken a Lease of *Drury-lane* Theatre; --- but being illegally shut out of that by the then Patentees, they were reduced to the Necessity of acting in the little Theatre in the *Hay-market* --- 'till, by Course of Law, they were restor'd to their Right in the other.

'Twas here we set up our Standard of Liberty; 'twas then we affix'd that Motto

--- And oh ! the bless'd Remembrance of those golden Times ! 'Twas here that upwards of a hundred successive Nights, as many crowded Audiences loudly spoke in Favour of our Attempts : And, to crown all, when the Laws were strain'd to crush us --- a Lord Chief Justice, whose Memory ought ever to be ador'd, asserted our Liberty, and defended us against the heavy Hand of Power, that fought to oppress us :--- But "*Tempora mutantur.*"--- How hard the present Condition of an Actor ! If not the Favourite or Flatterer of a Patentee, how deplorable may be his State !

The Endeavours of the Patentees, to suppress the Comedians, prov'd ineffectual, and the haughty Treatment they met with from those Patentees, render'd all Possibility of a Reunion hopeless :--- Then Mr. *Fletewood* bought the Patent, and theatrical Stock, at an easy Price ; the Actors return'd, and listed under his Banner, on advantageous Terms to both Parties : For awhile the Manager reap'd a plenteous yearly Harvest.---'Twere invidious to dwell on this Gentleman's Errors, which threw the Stage again into Confusion,

sion, and so reduced his own Affairs, he found it necessary to retire to *France* (where he died) at which Time, to satisfy a Mortgage by a Decree in Chancery, his Patent was sold to the best Bidder,--- and became the Property of Mess. *Green* and *Amber*, who admitted Mr. *Lacy* as a third Sharer, and invested him with the whole Power :--- The Purchasers (who were Bankers) fail'd soon after: Then Mr. *Lacy* contriv'd, not only to purchase their Shares,--- but had Address enough to gain a Promise of a new Patent,--- the old one being near expiring. To this Patent he admitted Mr. *Garrick* as a Partner, who is now become sole Manager, the other seeming content with his Share of the Profit.

The Characters of Nations, as well as private Persons, are best known by their Pleasures. --- This allow'd --- of what Consequence to this Island is the Conduct of our Theatres? When we consider what Numbers of Foreigners,--- of various Countries, and different Degrees of Distinction, through Curiosity, or Interest, pour into this vast Metropolis, and frequently make a Part

of those crowded Audiences, the Managers of Play-houses have so happy an Occasion to boast of. --- Does it not behove us to look into the Conduct of those Managers of Play-houses, who are honoured with so weighty a Trust, as the uncontrollable Direction of our monopolized Diversions ?

This perhaps is little considered by the greater Number of Spectators, who go to the Theatres merely as an idle Amusement — To while away the Hours, or dissipate the Spleen, — as Humour, Leisure, Indolence, or Fashion, lead 'em.

If we consider this general Humour of Dissipation in which People go to Plays — we shall no longer wonder we hear of frequent loud Applauses, most lavishly and indiscriminately bestow'd ; — — if they are amused they care not how, — and seldom stay to ask their Judgments the Question, — Whether the greatest Absurdities have not met with the greatest Encouragement ? And whether Patentees, and Players, have not joined in laying a Foundation for a false disgraceful Taste ?

Does

Does not this call loudly for Reformation ? — It rests on you, Gentlemen, who are properly call'd the Town.

That so deficient an Orator presumes to awake this Spirit in you, requires many Apologies:

Conscious of my Inabilities, I tremble at the Attempt ; — I doubt, like an o'er-heated Man, I have rush'd into a rapid Stream, and find, too late, my Strength unequal ; — plunging I implore your Mercy, I look towards your Good-nature, I trust to your Candour : — Already I see your friendly Hands extended to help me to Shore.

But your humane *British* Hearts will never fail to save the Man who throws himself on your Generosity.—Then let me boldly start to the Point at once—and cry out with *Jaffier* ;

“ I am among you — and by Heaven it glads  
“ me,  
“ To see so many Virtues, thus united,  
“ To restore Justice, and dethrone Oppres-  
“ sion.”

I am prompted by no Envy, no Malice guides me : If I point out the Mismanag-

ment, the Abuse of Power, and the unfair Treatment of Men of Genius: — If, on Enquiry, 'tis prov'd the Misconduct of Stage-Rulers is productive of a bad Taste — let them blame themselves.

If on Monition they mend their Manners, let 'em gratefully remember their Monitor: — As there is Room for Reformation (which begins more and more to be call'd for) I shall not fear, with the Spirit of a free-born *Englishman*, to attack these powerful mock Princes, in Behalf of the Actors in general, who may be call'd the Limbs of the Theatrical Body; and of our Authors, who may be justly stil'd the Soul of the Theatre.

Wit, Good-sense, and Politeness, were always thought necessary to support the Character and Dignity of the Stage, and that the Management of it ought to be instructed to Persons justly qualified to judge of all Performances fit to be introduc'd there: That Works of Genius might meet with proper Encouragement — and Dullness, and Immorality, be effectually excluded.

Has this been the constant Conduct of the present grand Director? I am about to speak but

but of one now. — That one will afford ample Theme enough.

Let us then view the Acting-Manager of *Drury-Lane* : — In the Year 1747, — He open'd that Theatre with an excellent Prologue : — The Conclusion of which gave the Town to hope — 'twould be their Fault if, from that Time, any Farcical Absurdity of Pantomime, or Fooleries from *France*, were again intruded on 'em.

— 'Twas the Town who were (from that auspicious Night of his Theatrical Inauguration)

— “ To bid the Reign commence  
 “ Of rescu'd Nature, and reviving Sense ;  
 “ To chace the Charms of Sound, and Pomp  
 “ of Shew,  
 “ For useful Mirth, and salutary Woe ;  
 “ Bid *Scenic* Virtue form the rising Age,  
 “ And Truth diffuse her Radiance from the  
 “ Stage.”

But has he kept his Word during his successful Reign ? Has the Stage been preserv'd in its proper Purity, Decency, and Dignity ? Have no good new Plays been refus'd

fus'd or neglected ? Have none, but the most moral, and elegant, of the old ones been reviv'd ? Have we not had a greater Number of those unmeaning Fopperies, mis-call'd Entertainments, than ever was known to disgrace the Stage in so few Years ? Has not every Year produc'd one of those patch-work Pantomimes ? These Masquing Mummeries, replete with Ribaldry, Buffoonery, and Nonsense ; — but void of Invention, Connection, Humour, or Instruction ? These *Arabian* Kickshaws, — or *Chinese* Festivals, — These, — call 'em what you please — As any one silly Name may suit 'em all alike — These Mockeries of Sense — These larger Kind of Puppet Shews — These idle Amusements for Children, and Holiday Fools ; — as ridiculously gaudy as the glittering Pageantry of a Pastry-Cook's Shop on a *Twelfth-night* ! — Cou'd he plead Necessity, for this Introduction of Theatrical Abuse, this Infamy of the Stage ! — This War upon Wit, in Behalf of Levity and Ignorance ? — No — he wanted no Encouragement to establish the Theatre, on a  
reputable

reputable Foundation, without these Auxiliaries;—his Theatre was constantly crowded, his Performances applauded; nor did the Spectators grudge paying the rais'd Prices, for a Play alone: --- If he fear'd this Taste for good Sense wou'd not last, --- 'twas at least worth a little longer Trial.

But Avarice is ever in haste to encrease its Store.—It never stays to consider what is most Laudable, when what may prove most Profitable is the Question.

Our Politic Man of Power therefore, wou'd not lose this Opportunity (of being in full Possession of the Favour of the Town) to introduce these Motley Mummeries, while he had it in his Power to make every Thing go down, that he judg'd for his Ease or Profit. In Consequence whereof, what large Rewards have been given to the Compiler of these Interludes, stol'n from the stale Night-Scenes of *Sadler's-Wells*, and *Bartholomew-Fair*? Such Rewards as wou'd have satisfied some Authors of Merit for as many good Plays.

More Money is annually squander'd on one of these foolish Farces—than, judici-ously

ously laid out, wou'd decorate three or four Tragedies, or Comedies,—in the bringing forward of which the Time, (lost on the other) might be more eligibly employ'd.

Has this little Giant Queller, who step'd forth in his Prologue, and promis'd the Town, to drive exotic Monsters from the Stage— has he kept his Word? On the contrary, has he not commission'd

“ Great *Harlequin* to lay the Ghost of  
“ Wit?

“ Exulting Folly Hails the Joyful Day,  
“ And Pantomime, and Song, Confirms her  
“ Sway.”

“ Tis True, he has given us some New Plays; and, we have been constantly told, that each succeeding one was to be more excellent than the former: So pregnant of Promises were our Stage Puffers, --- the Echoes of their little Monarch, — to have given them Credit, one must have imagin'd, all former Poets, Men of little Genius, compared to the all-be-praised Writers for the present Stage: But, unluckily for the Moderns, and happily for the Reputation of the old Writers, the Productions of both

are

are Printed.—Cou'd the Pen, or Pencil, describe, or delineate the Graces, and Excellencies, of some former Actors;—we shou'd not be pester'd with impertinent Comparisons, or a preposterous Preference, of any living Actor to a *Booth*, or a *Betterton*; as we have been with a Profusion of Praise equally bestow'd on a *Barbarossa*, and the noble Productions of *Otway*, and *Shakespear*:---Yet 'till *Barbarossa* was Printed, --- what a Parade of pompous Praise was lavish'd on it?

Unless a Play comes strongly recommended from some high Interest, how difficult is it to get it read?--- And how much more difficult it is, even then, to have it Acted, is well known to Several, who have gone through the ridiculous Ceremony: And to many more, who scorn'd the Attendance required by these Stage Dictators; to gain Admittance to them is frequently more difficult, than to come at a Prime Minister.

How drole to see the Mockeries of State--- when one of these petty Princes is surrounded by his little Theatrical Dendants,

pendants, watching the Motion of his Eye, — all joyous if he deigns to smile, — as downcast if his Looks are grave or sullen; but if the pleasant Prince condescends to joke, --- like Sir *Paul Pliant*, they are prepar'd to laugh incontinently: — They stand like *Antony's Kings*, --- “ who, “ when he said the Word — wou'd all start “ forth like School-boys to a Muff.” — Thus is the little Pride of a Manager puff'd up, by the servile Adulation of his Theatrical Dependants ; — who, poor unhappy Objects of Pity, never consider their abject State; Use has made their Fetters easy to 'em: Yet, how natural is it to demand, as on the Entrance of the Blacks in *Oroonoko* — “ Are all these Wretches Slaves ? — All, “ all Slaves ; --- they, and their Posterity, “ all Slaves ! ” —

From hence, this mock Prince presumes to expect such Solicitation, as Gentlemen, every Way his Superiors, cannot stoop to. — Then what avails the Merit of a Play, while such Monopolisers can prevent its Appearance ? — What Man of Spirit will undergo the ungenteel Treatment he is like to meet with

with from falacious Triflers?—Thus many a Piece is lost to the Town, that perhaps had given Credit to the Stage.

I will venture to affirm, there is now in being some dramatic Pieces (of which I have been favour'd with a Perusal) no ways inferior (I shall not say too much, if I add of superior Merit) to most that a partial Patentee, in his Wantoness of Power, has thrust upon the Town; and by his Stage Politicks, has supported for an unusual Number of Nights: Such is the Power of our Stage Dictators—who may cry out, *Drawcanfir* like,

“ All this I do, because I dare,”  
 The common Put-off to an Author, when the Patentee is not inclin'd to serve him, is —“ The Thing is pretty,—to be sure there's “ Merit in it,—But it wants Alteration ;—yet ; “ if it was alter'd, they have not Time :—Their “ Hands are full,—The Busines of their Sea- “ son is wholly plan'd,—They have not a Night “ to spare.”—And such paltry Put-byes as no one believes, not even themselves who say 'em. Not to dwell on the indifferent Plays they have acted, or some of more Merit that may

may have been refused by 'em,—let us enquire a little what mighty Business has so employed their Time, that not a few Nights can be found to give an Author fair Play ;—the present Season \* is now above half over, and what has been done ?—Why, the Town has been entertained with a frequent Repetition of their old Plays, and stale Farces ;—and one Farce, entitled the *Fair Quaker of Deal*, has been palm'd upon the Town as a reviv'd Comedy, and exhibited a greater Number of Nights, than formerly better Plays, much better acted, were ever known to reign : — As *Bartholomew Fair* has been some Years suppress'd, the politic Manager contriv'd to introduce Drolls on the Stage, at the Theatre Royal in *Drury-Lane*.—'Twas usual with the Masters of Droll Booths to get some Genius of a lower Class, to supply 'em with Scenes, detach'd from our Plays,—altered and adapted to the Taste of the holiday Audiences they were commonly perform'd to :—This Hint the Manager has taken—and of this gallimaufry Kind was the Pastoral (as he call'd it) exhibited at *Drury's Theatre*.—

The

\* This Dissertation was first deliver'd towards the End of January, 1756.

The *Winter's Tale*, of *Shakespear*, tho' one of his most irregular Pieces, abounds with beautiful Strokes, and touching Circumstances ;—the very Title (*A Winter's Tale*) seems fix'd on by the Author, as an Apology for, and a bespeaking of, a loose Plan, regardless of Rule, as to Time or Place :—The Story affected his Mind, and afforded a large Field for his lively Imagination to wander in :—And here—the Poet :

—“ Fancy's sweetest Child,  
“ Warbles his native Wood-Notes wild.”

In the Alteration, many of the most interesting Circumstances, the most affecting Passages, and the finest Strokes in writing, which mark the Characters most strongly, and are most likely to move the Heart, are entirely omitted, such as the Jealousy of *Leontes*, the Trial of *Hermione*, &c. What remains is so unconnected, — is such a Mixture of piecemeal, motley Patchwork, that *The Winter's Tale*, of *Shakespear*, thus lop'd, hack'd, and dock'd, appears without Head or Tail.—In order to curtail it to three Acts, the Story of the three first Acts of

the original Play (and which contain some of the noblest Parts) are crowded into a dull Narrative ; in the Delivery of which, the Performer makes no happy Figure :— So at the Beginning of the third Act, the principal Parts of the Story, which in the Alteration we might have expected to have seen represented, were given in two long-winded Relations, by two unskill'd Performers,—whose Manner, made 'em appear—“ As tedious—as a twice told Tale, “ vexing the dull Ear of a drowsy “ Man.”—And this hasty Hash, or Hotch-potch, is call'd altering *Shakespear*.—Whenever *Shakespear* is to be cut up—let's hope, some more delicate Hand, and judicious Head, will be concern'd in the Direction.

“ Let's carve him, like a Dish fit for the  
“ Gods !

“ Not hew him, like a Carcass fit for  
“ Hounds.”

I have heard of an Actor, who humorously told one of his Brother Comedians, that, whenever he had a Part, where the Redundancy of the Author run into too great

great a Length in the Scenes, --- he had recourse to a whimsical Expedient for the shortning of 'em : He had the whole Part wrote out, and then, gave it his Cat to play with :--- What Puss claw'd off, the Actor left out ; yet he generally found enough remain'd to satisfy the Audience.

In this frolicksome Manner, seems Master *Davy* to have laid his wanton Claws on *Shakespear's Winter's Tale*.--- Or, perhaps, he follow'd the Actor's Example, and left the Laceration of it to his Cat. --- Sure, he was not so avaritiously unreasonable, to demand of his Brother Manager, the Profits of the Third, Sixth and Ninth Nights, for the Benefit of his Cat.

However, his Houses were crowded ; for what he designs to give must be receiv'd.— It is *Hobson's* Choice with the Town.--- These monopolising Venders of Wit, like Fellows that sell Wine in a Jail, consult not the Health, or Pleasure of their Customers :--- But, as it adds to their Profit, force a Sale of their Balderdash, and then demand the Price of the best Wines ;---

No Matter, whether or no it pleases the Palates of the Purchasers. --- They must have that or nothing. — Were *Shakespear's Ghost* to rise, wou'd he not frown Indignation, on this pilfering Pedlar in Poetry, --- who thus shamefully mangles, mutilates, and emasculates his Plays ? *The Midsummer's Night's Dream* has been minc'd and frica-seed into an indigested and unconnected Thing, call'd, *The Fairies* : --- *The Winter's Tale*, mammoc'd into a Droll ; *The Taming of the Shrew*, made a Farce of ; --- and, *The Tempest*, castrated into an Opera. --- Oh ! what an agreeable Lullaby might it have prov'd to our Beaus and Belles, to have heard *Caliban*, *Sycorax*, and one of the Devils trilling of Trios. And how prettily might the North-Wind (like the Tyrant *Barbarossa*) be introduc'd with soft Mu-sick ! --- To crown all --- as the *Chinese* Festival prov'd the Devil of a Dance ; how cleverly might it have been introduc'd, in the *Tempest* new-vamp'd ; as a Dance of frolick-some Devils ? --- Rouse *Britons*, rouse, for shame ! and vindicate the Cause of Sense, thus sacrific'd to Mummery ! Think you see

*Shakespear's*

*Shakespear's Injur'd Shade*, with Patriot-Anguish, sighing over your implicit Belief, and Passive Obedience ; your Non-Resistance to this Profanation of his Memory : --- He grieves, to see your tame Submission to this merciless *Procrustes* of the Stage, who wantonly, as cruelly, massacres his dear Remains. --- Are you not ready to cry out. --- “ Ye Gods ! what Havock does this Scribler make, among *Shakespear's Works* ! ”

Yet this fly Prince would insinuate, all this ill Usage of the Bard is owing forsooth to his Love of him. --- Much such a mock Proof of his tender Regard, as *The Cobler's Drubbing his Wife*. ---

In the two last Bellman-like nonsensical Lines, of his absurd Prologue to the *Winter's Tale*, --- he tells you, ---

“ That 'tis his Joy, his Wish, his only Plan,

“ To lose no Drop of that immortal Man ! ”

Why truly, in the aforemention'd Pieces, he does bottle him up with a Vengeance ! --- he throws away all the spirited Part of him, all that bears the highest Flavour ; --- then,

to some of the Dregs, adds a little flat Stuff of his own, and modestly palms it on his Customers --- as Wines of the first Growth; a pleasant Beverage to offer Gentlemen, by way of *Bonne Bouche*: --- Did every tricking Vintner brew so scandalously? But thus it will be, 'till his Play-House-Puffers are thoroughly enquired into; -- and that it is publickly made known, both who and what they are; a Number of which, to the Amount of some Hundreds, are made free of the House, — or sent occasionally in with Orders, by one of his Agents; who, from thence, in Mockery, is not improperly call'd, the Orderly Serjeant. — From hence, the great Applause that always is lavishly bestow'd on every Thing, that is brought on that Stage: — But when these Place-Men, as they may be literally call'd, are pointed out, — as little Regard will be paid to the Claps of these Mercenaries, — as to the bawling Hirelings in *Smithfield* — who are appointed to roar out, Gentlemen, this is the only Booth in the Fair, — *The Wonder of the World is here, Gentlemen.*

So strongly had Fashion prevail'd, in Behalf of this lucky Son of Fortune, — that it became a Kind of Treason, among some People, even to hint a Possibility of his being in an Error: Such was the Infallibility of this Patentee, that if you heard any Tale of the Theatre, it reminded you of the *Tale of a Tub*, — where Lord *Peter*, having the sole Possession of the Will of his Father, paid no Regard to the Remonstrances of his Brethren; — his Power was not to be disputed, --- he became exceeding rich: --- But he kept his Brain so long, and so violently, on the Rack, that at last it shook of itself, and began to turn round for a little Ease: --- In short, what with Pride, Projects, and Knavery, poor *Peter* was grown distracted, and conceived the strongest Imaginations in the World: In the Height of his Fits (as it is usual with those who run mad out of Pride) he would call himself Almighty, and sometimes Monarch of the Universe: Elate with Power, and puffed up with Pride, *Peter* determined to thrust down Peoples Throats the coarsest Bread; and, with an insolent *Ipse Dixit*, insisted on its

having all the Qualities of every other Food.

But *Peter's* Pride, and Power, were at last pull'd down ; --- and a Pontiff-like Patentee may be shaken : --- Then may " he strut " and fret his Hour on the Stage."

" Then look aghast, when unforeseen Re-  
" proof comes pouring in on him from Box  
" and Pit." Or in a Fit of disappointed Pride,  
start, and cry, --- " Shall I, who to my kneel-  
" ing Players cou'd say, Rise a Theatric King,  
" --- shall I fall down at the proud Publick's  
" Foot, --- and cry, Have Mercy on me ?"

Silence the Clamour of these Mercenaries, --- ye generous Sons of *Britain* ! --- Exert your Power ; laugh the Herd to Scorn, who condescend to be thus meanly purchas'd : No longer endure this insolent Innovation, on the Works of your dear Countryman (your Nation's Glory) by the unmerciful Hand of this mongrel Pigmy of *Parnassus* : " The insulted Bard complains that ye are " slow, and Shakespear's Ghost walks unre-  
" veng'd amongst us." Resent the Injuries offer'd to this Poet. 'Tis expected from ye, Gentlemen, in Vindication of your Taste ;

--- as

--- as in a political, and patriot Sense, 'tis your Duty to-resist any audacious Attempt on your Liberties, or the Insolence of a *French* Invasion on your Country: --- No Wonder *Shakespear's* Name is insulted by Foreigners, while he is tamely suffer'd to be thus maltreated at Home.

We'll now drop the Patentee a-while, and look into the Merits of the Actor. --- That he often deserves all the Applause a favourable Audience may bestow, will not be deny'd; --- that he always deserves it, is a Question: That he is a great Genius, is allow'd. --- But that Judgment does not always direct his Spirit, will not sure be thought too bold an Assertion. --- Whatever Wants there may be in a Performer, which are the Defects of Nature, cannot be too tenderly touch'd; but Errors of the Judgment demand Reproof, --- and willful Errors, substituted in the Room of Truth, demand more: --- They ought to be pointed out; --- they ought to be exploded. ---

When an Actor prostitutes his Profession, for the vain Satisfaction of a false Applause, such

such paltry Ambition should be check'd by the severest Censures of the Publick.

The Faults, or Affectations of the Ignorant, or Undeserving, never fall under the Cognizance of Censure ; being, in their Nature, beneath it : But the Faults of Men of acknowledg'd Merit, and Genius, call on every Lover of his Country, and Taste, for an Antidote against the delicious Pois'on of their Errors, which are so greedily swallow'd by the Young, and Unexperienc'd. --- *Seneca*, a Man of Wit and Learning, despairing to rival the sober and masculine Eloquence of his Predecessors, step'd aside for Help, to all the meretricious Arts of Affectation, and Quaintness ; he obtain'd what he propos'd, by the tinsel Embroidery of a sparkling flashy Stile, and blaz'd forth the Idol of the gaping Multitude : --- While the Judicious repin'd in Secret, at the Rapidity of false Taste, which made gigantic Strides in the Republic of Letters. ---

But alas ! what was the Consequence ? As far short as *Seneca* fell of those great Writers, the true Reflectors of Nature, --- so did his Imitators, in regard to him ; --- for being devoid of

of his natural Capacity and Genius, they could attain nothing but his Tricks of Eloquence : --- Hence a general Depravity of Taste arose. --- Of which the celebrated Rhetor *Quintilian*, in his Lessons to the Youth of *Rome*, most pathetically complain'd, and gave wholesome Admonitions, to steer clear of the Syren Enchantments of *Seneca's Prismatic Eloquence*.

It can be deem'd no less than a Compliment to any favourite Actor in being, to compare him to *Seneca*. --- Permit me then, against a pleasing infectious Example, in humble Imitation of the Rhetor, to hold up the Test of Nature, Experience and Taste. --- If this Attempt may be thought worthy the Attention of disinterested Judges, --- let slavish Hirelings bark out their Dislike.

About fifteen Years ago, when our lively Hero first started up at *Goodman's Fields*, and met with that Encouragement he deserved; flush'd with Applause, after the long successful Strides he had taken in *Richard*, he determin'd to step into tragic Characters of a different Cast. Having the Theatres, at this

this End of the Town, in his Eye, --- he concluded, that, could he by any artful Means damn the Actors, then playing at the two Theatres Royal, it would not a little contribute to his Success : --- He therefore, with the Policy of a *Frenchman*, and the Cunning of a Jesuit, contriv'd to depreciate the Performance of those Players, in the Opinion of the Town, --- previous to his stepping into their Parts.

He recollect'd --- the *Rehearsal* had been reviv'd, about two Years before, and acted upwards of forty Nights in one Season, at the Theatre Royal, in *Covent-Garden* ; --- The Character of *Bayes*, he thought he cou'd pervert to his own Use, by indulging his artful Spleen, in mimicing the Actors, and by turning the Force of Ridicule on them, give Victory and Triumph to himself : --- On this, the Play was got up there --- and *Garrick's Bayes* (not *Buckingham's*, as it then appeared) was push'd on several Nights. Thus *The Rehearsal* was no longer consider'd as a witty Satyr on the Foibles, and Faults, of Authors, --- and a Reproof of the Town for their false Taste of the Drama :

--- It

---It became a motley Medley of Buffoonery, to explode the Actors. --- But, where did he attack 'em? --- On their weak Side, indeed, --- where they cou'd not be on their Guard : Instead of critically pointing out their Want of Taste, or Judgment, --- he cruelly turn'd the whole Artillery of his Mockery against their natural Defects, or such Particularities of Voice, which did not misbecome them ; nor met with Reproof, 'till his Vice of taking off, as it is call'd, became the foolish Fashion ; --- and taught School-Boys to be Critics.

His Attempts to prejudice the Million against his Brethren, had its desired Effect, --- several were hurt by it. --- The late Mr. *De-lane*, in particular, a Man of great Modesty, was so shock'd every Time he came upon the Stage after it, new Terrors seiz'd him, --- he could not not get the better of his Weakness ; so became a Votary to *Bacchus*, and sacrific'd his Life at that Shrine.

If, poor Man, he had been Master of Temper and Resolution enough, to have rous'd a proper Spirit on this Occasion, and had sought the Improvement he was capable

of in his Profession, he might still have been giving Pleasure to the Town in several Characters ; --- such as Lord *Hastings*, *Pyrrhus*, *Varanes*, *Bajazet*, *Antony*, *Hotspur*, and *Alexander* ; to these his Power of Voice, his Comeliness of Countenance, his graceful Action, and Dignity of Deportment, render'd him more equal than the Actor, who so wantonly attack'd him ; in which Attack, the Mimic shew'd he cou'd only transiently hit on some peculiar Tones of the other's Voice : — It had been better for this Mimic, cou'd he have equall'd the Actor in all his happier Gifts of Nature.

As this Actor was thus indulg'd in his mimicing the Defects of Nature, I hope, I may be allow'd to point out the less pardonable Errors of Judgment ; or more unanswerable Tricks of the Player, knowingly introduc'd, against the Conviction of Sense, and Judgment : These modern Clap-Traps of the Stage, --- where Reason is sacrific'd to Vanity, --- where Vehemence supplies the Place of Spirit, and Extravagancies are call'd Beauties ; --- where mouthing, and ranting,

pass for Elocution, and the Voice so injudiciously forced, the Power is lost e'er half the Part is play'd. A false *Jeu du Theatre* becomes, too often, the Vice of some present Actors ; --- but they are happy, if they can thereby raise a Clap from the Million : --- No Matter whether the Applause is just, so it be loud : --- When Stage Tricks become so frequent, may we not say, ---

“ Nature's forsook --- our new Theatric Art,  
 “ Aiming to strike the Eye, neglects the  
 “ Heart,”

The Actor, I'm about to speak of, has undoubtedly several natural Requisites, and some acquir'd Talents ; --- and altogether is justly deem'd a good Comedian : --- His Performance in *Kitely*, in *Every Man in his Humour*, is so excellent a Piece of Nature, --- so truely comic, --- it makes Amends for all the Farce with which that indelicate Piece of low Humour abounds.

But is not his chief Talent Comedy? not of the genteel Cast, --- but of the lower Kind ? --- This perhaps, by a candid Exam-en of his Abilities, and Execution, may be

be made appear : --- As may his Errors in Tragedy : --- Some of those Errors a Gentleman of Wit, and great Vivacity, --- an admirable Mimic, has pleasantly pointed out, and humourously exploded ; --- the Correction was of Use to the Actor : Perhaps, future Remarks may be of farther Use to him. --- If we look into his favourite Character of *Ranger*, shall we not find less of the Gentleman in the Performance, than the Author intended in the Writing ? --- That he is exceeding lively and entertaining, is certain ; but, that he is sometimes, even most absurdly rude, will appear, by only remarking his ungentlemanlike Behaviour, in one single Scene. --- He meets with *Frankly* and *Bellamy*, --- both supposed to be Gentlemen ; *Frankly* particularly, a Man of Fashion, and Fortune : --- This very Gentleman (without any Regard to Decency or good Manners) *Ranger* makes his Leaning-stock, and, lolling a considerable Time on his Shoulder, indulges himself in being pleasant on *Bellamy* : --- Can any Friendship, or Intimacy, tolerate such ill-bred Freedom

dom in a Man, to consult his own Ease, without feeling the Pain he must give his Superior?

Oh! but it's a pretty Attitude forsooth, he caught it perhaps, from a *French Print*, where a Gentleman leans against the high Base of a Pillar, in a Garden; it took his Fancy probably, and this *Attitudinarian* was resolved to introduce it. --- No Matter for the Impropriety of making a Gentleman his Lolling-Post.

This is but one of the many study'd Absurdities. --- How ridiculous might be the Consequence, if the Person who plays *Frankly*, were to give him the Slip, and drop Master *Ranger* to the Ground! tho' this might become *Frankly*, as a humorous Reproof of *Ranger's* Rudeness, --- yet the poor Player, whom Necessity has taught to prefer Slavery, to the Liberty of starving, must rather seem to think himself honour'd by this impertinent Freedom, as it comes from the Manager.

That he displays in *Archer* great Vivacity must be granted; — but that the Gentleman appears thro' the Footman, or, that his Deportment, and Address, are equal to the Character, when he puts on the

Habit of the Gentleman, --- is what I never heard asserted. --- This, and the still superior Characters in genteel Comedy, seem now quite lost : --- We have strutting Flashes, and finical Fribbles, pert Prigs, bold Bucks, and dapper Smarts : --- But, when do we meet on the Stage, a genteel Character, supported with a graceful Ease, and Elegancy, expressive of the Man of Quality ? Or that gives any Idea of a well-bred Person, used to polite Assemblies, or the Manners of a Drawing-Room ? --- Who is there at the Head of the Stage to set the Example ? --- We have seen a Comedy revived, and played to a surprising Number of Audiences, wherein the Person, who performed the principal Character, was in an Error, from Beginning to End ; — and yet, the Play-House Puffers extolled it, as the Master-Stroke of Comedy : --- They rung the Changes on the Words Amazing ! Great ! Surprising ! Fine ! Immense ! Pleasant ! Prodigious ! Inimitable ! till every Ear was tired with the Sound : --- Any one, who never saw the Performance, might have concluded from Report, That the fulsome Flattery a certain Writer bestow'd

on him, was but Truth, --- when he said, --- " This Actor was not only the most excellent of his Profession that ever was, --- but that ever would be." --- I imagine, e'er I name the Title of this Comedy, most People will guess I mean the *Chances*.

It has been remarked, in this Play, the Poet, in his Wantonness of Humour and Spirit, seemed determined to declare open War upon Decency, --- and scorning double Entondre, speaks plain *English*: --- The chief Business of the Drama is barefaced Prostitution.

It was wrote by *Fletcher*, --- but it was so well suited to the Taste of the loose Wits of King *Charles* the Second's Court, that the Witty Debauchee *Buckingham*, thought it worth his Revisal, and Alteration.

Mr. *Pope* elegantly inveighs against Plays of this Cast, and justly satyrises the Taste of those Times, when the Obscenity of a Piece was no Objection, if supported with Pleasantry: --- Perhaps this Play was in his Thoughts, when he says, ---

“ The Fair sat panting at a Courtier’s Play,  
 “ And not a Mask went unimprov’d away ;  
 “ The modest Fan was lifted up no more,  
 “ And Virgins smil’d at what they blush’d  
 “ before :  
 “ These Monsters, Critics, with your Darts  
 “ engage,  
 “ Here point your Thunder,—here direct  
 “ your Rage !”

The Revival of this Play, undoubtedly, laid  
 the sober Part of the Town under no small  
 Obligation to the immaculate Manager.

But however incorrect or loose the Plan of  
 this Play appears ;—the Author certainly  
 drew his Characters from Nature,---and sup-  
 ports ’em well :—“ *Servetur ad unum,* ”

I apprehend, it readily appears to any one  
 who reads this Play — That, in *Don John*, the  
 Poet meant to give us a spirited Representa-  
 tion of a young Nobleman on his Travels : —  
 However gay his Youth, or wild his Consti-  
 tution,—he entertains high Notions of Ho-  
 nour :—Gallantry is but a secondary Principle  
 of his Character,—he never deviates from  
 the stately Pride of a *Spaniard*, tho’ he re-  
 ceives a Challenge, and fights a Duel, with

a *Non-Chalance* of Temper, that nothing but the greatest Courage can support.

To personate this noble joyous Voluptuary, there should be Comeliness, Grace, a spirited Dignity, and Ease ;—he should appear the Rake of Quality ;—not a pert Prig, let loose on a Holiday.—In his most unguarded Frolics, we should not lose Sight of the Nobleman.—In this Light, I am informed, did the Character of *Don John* appear, when the great *Betterton* played it ; in this Light have I beheld it, when perform'd by that Master of genteel Comedy, Mr. *Wilks*.

But as my Friend the Doctor says,—“ The College have altered all that now, and proceed upon an entire new Principle.”—If an Actor finds himself unequal to a Part, why will he undertake a Task imposed on him only by his own Vanity ?—But, says this arch Manager,—“ 'Tis the Business of Comedy to make People laugh,—I can fill the Part with Pleasantry, tho' I neglect Propriety ; I have Fashion on my Side,—and a Faction to support me,—none dare dispute my Taste or Power :—And, if I can't rise to *Don John*, I'll bring *Don*

“ *John* down to me:—So, enter *Ranger* in  
 “ a *Spaniſh* Jacket.” Had it been a Harle-  
 quin Jacket, it wou’d not have misbecome  
 the Part, as it is now new-model’d.—Where  
 Nature is neglected, the Gentleman entirely  
 dropt, and lively Absurdities, with brisk Buf-  
 fooneries, make up the strange Melange:—  
 ‘Tis no longer the noble *Don John*,—’tis a  
 little *Jack-a-dandy*.

To point out Particulars, where the whole  
 is absurd, were endleſs;—One is as good as  
 a Hundred:—Only think of this young *Spaniſh* Nobleman, because his Ear is caught  
 by the Sound of a Fiddle from the Window  
 of a Tavern, being tempted to give you a  
 Touch of a Hornpipe in the Middle of the  
 Street.

Is it in Nature to suppose any Gentleman,  
 in his Senses, could be guilty of so ridiculous  
 an Absurdity?—How must the Stage im-  
 prove from these lively Specimens of genteel  
 Comedy?

When an Actor presumes to substitute the  
 farcical Liberties of an Harlequin, instead of  
 a just Representation of Nature,—what must  
 be his Ignorance,—or what his Assurance?

What

What should be his Reward—if thus he deviates from the unerring Rule, that great Judge of Nature, *Shakespear*, lays down for his Direction, when he admonishes the Player : “ Not to o'erstep the Modesty of “ Nature, whose End, both at the first, was, “ and now is, to hold, as it were, a Mirror “ up to Nature.”—“ This over-done, or “ come tardy of, though it may make the “ Unskilful laugh, cannot but make the Ju-“ dicious grieve : The Censure of which one, “ —ought to o'er-sway a whole Theatre of “ others.”

As this Genius has a Knack of slicing Comedies into Farces, and frittering *Shakespear* into Drolls, Pastorals, and Operas :—As we have many Instances of his happy Talents for altering, and embellishing old Plays,—’tis Pity he did not make a new one of the *Chances* ;—had he but given *English* Names to the Characters, and remov’d the Scene to *London*, — this, with the new Manner of acting, might have made it pass for a new Comedy, under the well-adapted Title of, *The Delights of Dame D--gl-ss: Or, The Frolics of Master Jacky in Covent Garden.*

Tho' I have as quick a Perception of the Merits of this Actor, as his greatest Admirers, and have not less Pleasure from his Performance, when he condescends to pursue simple Nature:—Yet I am not therefore to be blind to his studied Tricks, his Over-fondness for extravagant Attitudes, frequent affected Starts, convulsive Twitchings, Jerkings of the Body, sprawling of the Fingers, slapping the Breast and Pockets:—A Set of mechanical Motions in constant Use,—the Caricatures of Gesture, suggested by pert Vivacity,—his pantomimical Manner of acting, every Word in a Sentence ;—his unnatural Pauses in the Middle of a Sentence ;—his forc'd Conceits,—his wilful Neglect of Harmony, even where the round Period of a well express'd noble Sentiment demands a graceful Cadence in the Delivery.

These, with his mistaken Notions of some Characters, and many other Vices of the Stage, which his Popularity has supported him in, I shall take a proper Opportunity of remarking, in a more particular Manner, and laying such Observations before the superior Judgment of the Town.

An Actor, who is a thorough Master of his Part,—not only in Point of Memory, but by having clearly conceived, and entered into the Spirit of the Sentiment and Expression,—will stand in no Need of premeditated Gestures or Attitudes ; the Words and Situation will, of themselves, suggest 'em to him ; and they will appear the more natural, and consequently have the greater Effect, for their not having the Air of Study, and Preparation.

The various Inflexions of Voice, the Stress of the Emphasis, the just Proportion of Pathos, neither carried improperly into Rant, nor over-tame, but governed by the Occasion :—All these will rise so naturally, that the Part will seem to act the Actor, instead of being acted by him :—The Emotions, in short, shou'd begin at the Heart,—and there's no Doubt of the Voice and Body receiving such right Directions from it, as can never fail of making proper Impressions : Whilst moving of the Head, Legs, and Arms, by Rule and Compas, must have comparatively a cold, insipid, and even a ridiculous Effect :—Nor is this Complaint a new one ;

— even

—even in *Aristotle's Days*, there was an Actor call'd *Callipides*, who used to prefix his Motions before he came on the Stage; the Affectation of it was so palpable, that *Menesius* his Rival, nick-named him the *Ape*, from that Disfigurement which the Characters he play'd receiv'd from his trickful Imitation:—I call it trickful, because all those forelaid Attitudes, or *Puggifications*, are the poor Arts of those who are not capable of exhibiting, or, what is still worse, are insensible of the Beauty of Nature.— Our Stage, in its present State, affords more Examples of those who follow the Manner of a *Callipides*, than of a *Betterton*, or a *Booth*, who were not above receiving their Directions from Nature, that great Guide and President over all the imitative Arts, and especially the Theatre, from whence however she has been so long banished.

To this Extravagance of Behaviour, in acting, and to the Applauses thus frequently and easily gain'd, is it not owing that the epidemical Distemper of Spouting (according to the modern Phrase) has spread itself so widely?—When young Men cease to consider

consider Acting as an Art,—an Art too, that requires, perhaps, more natural Requisites, more acquir'd ones, more Time, Experience, Study, and Knowledge, than many others,—we need not be surprised, that so many Candidates for Fame are so ready to expose themselves :—They regard it not in that Light.—They judge, from the extraordinary Examples set 'em, that a little Ranting or Mouthing, a Start or two, an *outré* Attitude, and a few harlequinade Tricks, are all the Requisites to make a compleat Actor.—And as Managers, not so careful of the gradual Improvement of the Stage, as greedy of present Gain, too frequently allow raw unexperienced Men to start out in top Characters (however unequal to 'em, or hopeless of Improvement) with a View, that the bare Novelty may draw an Audience,—and as such Heroes, made in a Hurry, are too ready to mistake the Encouragement of an indulgent Audience, for an Applause due to their superior Merit ;—what Hopes is there of seeing a Set of good Actors, compleatly and regularly form'd ?

Formerly, each Actor, by Degrees, came forward ; they began at the lower Round of the Ladder :—But now they take a flying Leap to the Top at once :—Tho', indeed, they generally drop as suddenly to the Bottom. To this Misconduct of the Managers, and bad Examples of the Performers, is it not owing, that such a Number of young Men neglect their various Professions, for which their Talents are more happily adapted, to follow this *Ignis Fatuus* of Stage Fame?—They think of nothing less than being applauded Heroes on the Stage, and from thence, like their Cousin Sir *Francis* (for they are all nearly related to the *Wrong-heads*) propose to indulge themselves in the eas'y-gain'd Income of a trifling Thousand a Year—“just to be doing with, 'till some—“what better falls in.”—Tho' a few (a very few) may have succeeded ;---yet, alafs! what a Number of young People, disappointed of these flattering Views, have, in the End, found themselves literally Actor-bit?—By this Delusion, many young Men, to the Grief of their Parents and Friends, have been lost to the World, who, had they followed

lowed the more eligible Professions they were design'd for, might have lived to have been a Comfort to their Friends, a Joy to their Families, an Honour to themselves, and respectable Members of public Society.

I have heard of an Academy, — intended to consist of a select Number of Gentlemen, eminent for their Taste of the *Belles Lettres*; and some, whose Works have the deserv'd Estimation of the Public: — On which Plan it will be propos'd, to support Authors of Merit; — to give Praise to the Deserving, and due Censure to the Dull and Presuming; — to shew the many, why they are pleas'd; — and with what they ought to be delighted: — May that laudable Scheme succeed, and prevent the Depravity we are falling into, by rescuing sound Sense, and Morality, from the barbarous Attacks of Ignorance, and Gothism! I have also heard a Weekly Paper, under their Inspection, will be publish'd, entitled, *The Theatre*; wherein no mean Arts will be us'd, to prejudice the Public in favour of an unworthy Author, or Actor; nor will any Writer, or Performer,

of any Degree of Merit, be depreciated thro' the Wantonness of Mirth, or to gratify the Vanity, or Spleen, of another. — Whenever this Paper appears, —

“ Dread it, ye Dunces, and Dramatic  
“ Drones !

“ Tremble, ye Tyrants, on Theatric  
“ Thrones !”

Thus may the encroaching Power of Managers be properly check'd, and rational Entertainments alone become the polite Amusement of the Town ; thus may our giddy, and unwary Youth, be caution'd against the dangerous Illusions of Falsehood — who, in her gaudy Trappings, oft bewilders their Imaginations, and enchantingly entices 'em to become her Admirers, — while they totally neglect the simply-elegant Beauties of unaffected Truth. — 'Till this Plan is put in Execution, — and I hope the Interim will be but short, — permit me humbly to propose an Expedient, for the immediate Correction of Theatrical Misconduct.

Many public Companies have proper Officers appointed to inspect their Conduct ;  
some

some have their Governors, some their Directors ; and our Universities have their Visitors.

Since then these Patentee Potentates, out of their immense Humanity and Goodness, will allow me Time from my Avocation as an Actor,---What if I become the Volunteer-Visitor of the Theatres !---To look into, and report their Proceedings, whether worthy of Praise or Censure.---This is a Post I can appoint myself :--- And if the Thought meets with the Approbation of my honoured Friends and Patrons, I shall endeavour to discharge that Office, to the best of my Abilities, with Impartiality, Integrity, and Justice : Thus, in Spight of their unjust Oppression, I may still continue, what I have ever thought it an Honour to be, the most obliged, devoted Servant of the Publick.

As a Theatrical Visitor then, give me Leave to lay before you, some of the studied Absurdities, or Callipedian Ape-Tricks, which are often substituted, instead of the instinctive unaffected Actions, which simple Nature would have directed.

Of

Of this Kind, is the pantomimical acting every Word in a Sentence. --- When *Benedict* says, --- " If I do, hang me in a Bot-  
tle like a Cat, and shoot at me!" --- Methinks, this flight short Sentence requires not such a Variety of Action, as minutely to describe the Cat being clapp'd into the Bottle, then being hung up, and the farther painting of the Man shooting at it: --- But such Things we have seen, nay sometimes seen applauded. --- Observe the Golden Rule of not too much; this Rule every Actor shou'd pay regard to.

But how is this observed when *Richard* (as I have seen it played) in his very first Speech, wherein he describes his sullen Mood of Mind, his Restlessness of Spirit, unemployed in War, --- his conscious Unfitness to join in the sportive, piping, medley Amusements of idle Peace, --- ironically says, ---

" I have no Delights to pass away my Hours,  
" Unless to see my Shadow in the Sun,  
" And descant on my own Deformity."

This

This Idea of descanting on his own Deformity, is what his hurt Imagination would naturally turn from, the Moment it occurs to him : — But for the Sake of an Attitude, which is sure to be dwelt on 'till the Audience clap, ---- this Sentence is commonly clos'd with an Action of pointing to the Ground, and fixing the Eye thereon for some Time, as if *Richard* had a real Delight in ruminating on his uncouth Person. --- Again, after he has woo'd, and (to his own Surprise) has won the Widow *Anne*, --- can we suppose, that *Richard* is such a Fool, as really to think himself comely of Person, when he, exulting on his Success, in wanton Pleasantry, breaks out ;

“ My Dukedom to a Widow's Chastity,  
“ I do mistake my Person all this while.”

Or when he says ---

“ I'll have my Chambers lin'd with Look-  
“ ing-Glass,  
“ And entertain a Score or Two of Taylors  
“ To study Fashions to adorn my Body.”

*Richard* is not such a Simpleton, seriously to intend this,---'tis Laughter all, and Mockery of the Widow's Weakness ;--- yet I have seen a *Richard*; when he makes his Exit with these Lines, ---

“ Shine out fair Sun 'till I salute my Glass,  
“ That I may see my Shadow as I pass.”

This Rum-Duke *Richard*, has gone halting off, all the Way looking at, and admiring his suppos'd Shadow on the Ground.

Is this being the Actor ? --- Is it not Buffoonery ? But what shall we think of a *Richard*, who, in the last Act, when he is met by *Norfolk*, in the Field, at the Head of the Army ; --- instead of assuming the Air of Gallantry and Intrepidity, which marks the Character of *Richard*? What shall we think of a *Richard*, who bounces on like a Madman, and bellows out,

“ Well, *Norfolk*, what thinkst thou now ? ”

Might not Master *Norfolk* reply,

“ I think you are mad, Sir.”

But

But the mouthing Rant infected the inferior Performer, who, in Return, roared out,  
 " That we shall conquer, Sir."

Nay, to that Extravagance is this Mockery of Spirit carried on; --- that *Richard* reads the few Lines, *Norfolk* puts into his Hand, in a vociferous angry Tone, as if he knew their Meaning e'er he saw them: --- Tho' the very Lines that follow, shew *Richard* is unmov'd by 'em, and scornfully disregards 'em.

" A weak Invention of the Enemy."

But that cool Scorn, I have heard ranted out, as if poor *Richard* was quite out of his Wits. --- What Consistency of Character is here preserv'd, or what Regard paid to Nature? Is it not Mummery all? the frequent Starts, with which our Stage Performances abound at present, are not unworthy Notice. ---

They are so common, they sometimes tire the Eye, --- and often so improper, they offend the Understanding: --- Some of this Sort we have seen in *Romeo*. This unhappy Lover, when in the last Act, he is in-

form'd of the Death of his beloved *Juliet*, --- is at once struck with a deep Despair, and immediately determines that Night, to embrace her, even in Death : --- He coolly resolves on taking Pois'on, and sends a Letter, to inform his Father of the Cause of his Death. He has but little Time to execute this in, the Night being far spent ; ---- yet the Actor can find Time, it seems, between his quitting the Apothecary, and his going to the Tomb, to shift his Cloaths, that he may die, with the Decency of a Malefactor, in a Suit of Black : --- This Trick of Stage Drapery, --- puts one in Mind of Miss *Notable*, a young jilting *Coquette*, who, when she's informed, one of her young Lovers is wounded in a Duel, on her Account, --- amidst her affected violent Exclamations of Grief, --- says, --- " She'll go and see the dear Creature ; but it shall be in an Undress : 'Twill be proper, at least, to give her Grief the Appearance of as much Disorder as possible : --- Yes, I'll change my Dress immedately." — And so she does. — But what need for *Romeo* to do this ? — Has he Leisure,

sure, or wou'd he bestow a Thought on such a Trifle? — Well, but he's now going to the Tomb, — his first Thought is to dispatch his Servant, from whom he conceals his real Intent; and threatens him to presume to watch him at Peril of his Life: — Yet, on the opening of the Scene, — the Actor, with folded Arms, advances about three or four Steps, — then jumps, and starts into an Attitude of Surprize: — At what? — Why, at the Sight of a Monument, he went to look for: — And there he stands, 'till a Clap from the Audience relieves him from his Post. Is not this forced? Is it not misplaced? --- Is it not as improper, as ranting loudly those Threats to his Servant, which shou'd be delivered in an under Voice, expressive of Terror, — but not mouth'd out loud enough to alarm the Watch.

I wou'd also submit it to the Judgment of the Public, whether a favourite Attitude, into which *Romeo* throws himself, on the Appearance of *Paris*, is a Beauty, or an Absurdity?

*Romeo* is a Gentleman, has a Sword by his Side; --- Education is a second Nature:

May we not reasonably suppose that, on his being diverted from his Purpose of opening the Tomb, when call'd on by *Paris*, that he would immediately drop that unwieldy Instrument, the Iron Crow, and have recourse to his Sword? --- Would not this be the instinctive Resource of the Gentleman.

But then this *Cyclopedian* Attitude wou'd be lost, in which *Romeo*, now, stands long enough to give *Paris* Time to run him thro' the Body, which wou'd be justifiable, when a Man saw such a Weapon, rais'd by an Enemy, to dash out his Brains.

No Wonder the Generality of an Audience clap, as they may well be astonished, to see my little *Romeo* wield this massy Instrument with such Dexterity: — But their Admiration would cease, when let into the Secret, that this seeming iron Crow is really but a painted wooden one: Were it not so, — it would be as impossible for the fictitious *Romeo* to manage it, — as it is improbable the real *Romeo* would have made such a Use of it: — The Author did not intend he should, — since he makes 'em both engage with their

their Swords, as Gentlemen naturally wou'd. —

To such an Extravagance is this Fondness for Attitude indulged, that in *Merope*, we have some bold Strokes of that Sort represented; even at an Hour's Distance from the Time the Action happen'd. Towards the End of the last Act, *Narbās* and *Ismene* are left on the Stage, dreading the Fate of *Merope* and *Eumenes*. — They are alarmed as the distant *Dīn* of Shouts, of battling Parties, echoing Trumpets, and Groans of dying Men. — *Euricles* enters, and in a spirited Description, relates the Death of the Tyrant *Polyphontes*, by the Arm of the brave young Prince *Eumenes*: — The High Priest follows him, --- and farther informs 'em, --- the Tumult is appeas'd; the Queen and her Son are victorious; Silence has succeeded Uproar; and the joyous People, with awful Homage, hail *Eumenes* King.

But on drawing the Scene, --- what Object salutes the Eye of the Spectators? — Instead of the mutual Transports and Congratulations of Mother, Son and People,

on this happy Deliverance, and unexpected Revolution, --- Why, --- we are entertain'd with the following Groupe, --- that bloody Object the Tyrant, still lies sprawling on the Floor, as new fallen from the topmost Steps of the Altar. --- The poor Mother is continued in her fainting Fit ; — *Eumenes*, mounted at the Altar, with pendant Eye, and with uplifted Arm, seems as if he was going to repeat the vengeful Stroke he long before had given *Poliphontes*. ---

Any one who looks into the Play, will find no Direction for this ill-judg'd *Post-facto* Representation : --- No, --- This is the pretty fanciful Conceit of the Stage-Director. --- These are thy Triumphs ! thy Exploits ! --- O *Davy* ! --- His Fancy was enraptur'd, and his Imagination overheated ; --- so, like *Alexander* at the Feast, he

“ Fought his Battles o'er again,  
“ And thrice he flew the Slain.”

When we consider the vast Extent of this o'ergrown Metropolis, --- its prodigious Number of additional Buildings, --- and its great Increase of Inhabitants, --- it appears a Mat-  
ter

ter of Surprise, that two Theatres should be judg'd sufficient ; when I remember six flourishing in one Season, some Years ago : And yet, on a moderate Computation, the Number of Play-going People is now twenty to one, compar'd with that Time.

As People will have their Amusements -- (and a well conducted Dramatic Entertainment, is allow'd to be the most rational one,) as the pleasurable Money expended throughout this Kingdom Amounts to a vast Sum. --- Would it be absurd to propose, that at least, four Theatres, fix'd at different Quarters of *London*, and *Westminster*, should be again allowed ? --- And that a certain Number of travelling Companies of Comedians should be appointed, thro' the several Circuits of the Kingdom, and allotted their different Towns to play in, at different Seasons of the Year ? If too, from the Profits of these, a Fund might be rais'd, for what public Use the Legislature might think proper to appoint, --- what Emolument to this Kingdom might thence arise ! --- Let the Stage Direction be the Care of some few of the se-

nior Actors of each Theatre, whose Experience and Abilities fit 'em for it ; --- let 'em be consider'd for that Trouble ; --- let the Actor have his honest Hire and Benefit : --- Let the Authors be amply rewarded. --- Let proper Persons be appointed to inspect the Accounts monthly, and to receive a Proportion of the Profits, to be paid for public Uses, into the *Exchequer* : Let the Stage Manager every Year make his Report to a Committee of Gentlemen (to be chosen every three Years) who are to hear and determine all necessary Causes relative to the Theatre : --- In their Power it should be, to prevent the Tyranny of Managers, --- and the Idleness, or Exorbitancy, of Performers. --- There has been Instances, when Men of the first Rank have not thought it beneath 'em to become Directors of an Academy of Musick ; --- and, I suppose, there are many Gentlemen who would think it no less honourable, to become the Directors of a Plan, for the Encouragement of good Sense, and Morality.

Here I drop my Subject for the present, --- and now Ladies and Gentlemen, what  
Words

Words can speak --- what Manner express the Sense I have of my Obligations to you ! --- Let your own generous Hearts speak for me, --- I want Language : I want, even Power of Utterance, on this Occasion.

I fear the Task I undertook, in giving this Dissertation, stands in need of many Apologies. --- Believe me, Gentlemen, 'twas not Vanity, 'twas not Spleen prompted me, --- cruel (let me add undeserv'd) Oppression drove me to it ; --- you know my hard Condition, without my expatiating thereon : --- But, while I am blessed with your Countenance, and Protection, I can teach myself to scorn the *Insult* of an *unmerited Injury*, ---- to have a *proper Contempt* for the *Falshoods* of *pregnant Slander*, and an *honest Indignation* for the *unfeeling Insolence* of *upstart Pride*.

They may endeavour to take my Food from me, --- they cannot take away my Stomach ; --- they may try to break my Fortune, they shall not break my Spirit : --- I may yet find Means, legally, in a more extended Manner, to give the Town Entertainment.

There

There is in *England*,--a Power above their Influence, --- to which any injur'd oppress'd *Englishman* has a Right to apply by Petition ; a Power from whence the lowest Subject may hope for Redress.

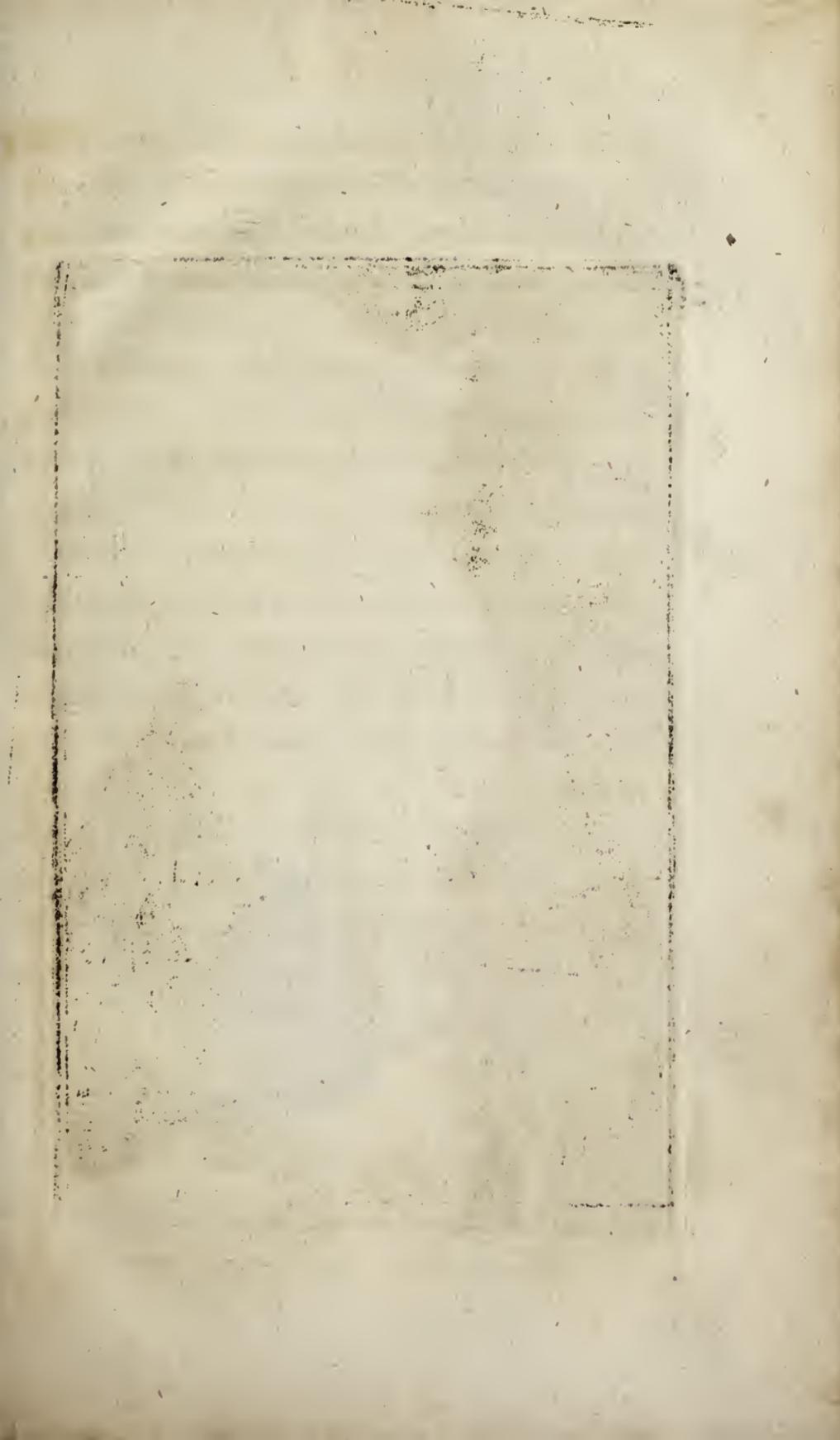
Happy should I have been, cou'd I have procur'd an abler Hand to have embellish'd this Subject : --- Happy shall I still be, shou'd this Attempt awaken a Man of Genius to pursue it.

My Circumstances, which your Humanity will feel, are my best Excuse, --- and throws me on your Candour and Generosity, for Pardon to my Errors, and Protection from my Oppressors.

I shall now conclude this first Dissertation, with the Words the Poet *Messenger* puts into the Part of *Paris* the Actor, at the Conclusion of his Defence before a *Roman* Senate :

— “ I have said, --- and now as you  
“ find Cause,  
“ Or censure me, or free me with Applause.

End of the FIRST DISSERTATION.





And let all Parties blame me, if they can,  
Who're brib'd by Honours trifling as a Fan.



## C I B B E R's

### Second DISSERTATION.

*Friends, Britons, Countrymen, lend me your  
Ears.*



ENTLEMEN *Antigallicans*,  
---under which Denomination, in  
the present Crisis of Affairs, all  
Lovers of their Country, and  
its Constitution, all worthy the Name of  
*Briton*, ought to be rang'd. --- It is some  
Alleviation to my Grievances, to find,  
that —— some Associate, or Partisan, of  
the chief Instrument of my Persecution  
--- has strove, thro' very indirect Means, at  
the Expence of Truth, by the Misrepresen-  
tation of a laudable *British* Resentment, to  
have affrontful Reflections propagated against  
you, Gentlemen: —— Of this, one of the

B most.

most glaring Instances, is a contemptible *French Libel*, --- inscribed, *A Letter from Monsieur De Voltaire, to the People of England, on their wrong Behaviour towards the French Dancers*: It may be very difficult to prove, by whose particular Contrivance this Letter was publish'd; or who was the real Author: --- But sure, it is not so hard to guess, by whose Connivance, at least, (if not immediate Direction) this extraordinary Epistle was wrote. --- One of the chief sophisticating ironical Arguments, in this curious Piece, is, --- that it's beneath the Dignity of a Man *English* born, to be a Musician, Dancer, or Valet de Chambre; that for such Uses we should employ Foreigners only, --- as the *Romans* did *Greek* Slaves: --- Not considering, --- *Englishmen* desire no Slaves to herd among 'em. --- Besides, as every *Englishman* is not born to an independent Fortune, --- and as it is not a Place for Idlers, --- Why may not an *Englishman*, in Quality of a Musician, or Dancing-Master, parade in a Chariot, as well as a Swarm of Foreigners, who have no Resource for the Support of their several Equipages, but the degenerate

generate Taste of too many People of Fortune? --- And really, such a Situation is more eligible, than to work all Day at a Loom, or Smith's Forge; whatever his Fallacy of Argument would, sarcastically insinuate to the contrary: --- And, while Money is to be given among People, who are Professors of amusing Arts, --- Is it not most eligible to bestow it on our own Natives? --- Or are they disqualified for an Eminence, in such Professions?

'Tis too well known, that we lavish away a great deal of Money, in purchasing Baubles, and Follies, from *France*; --- happier were it for us, if, in lieu of their Fopperies, we sometimes condescended to take a Hint from their Policies. --- While *England* (with Concern I say it) is become, to a Proverb, "The sweet Milch-Cow of every other Nation;" --- *France*, far from countenancing Foreigners in any Shape (unless it be some of our idle Spendthrifts, to waste their Fortunes there) ever give Preference to their own Countrymen --- 'Tis well known, they have effectually eradicated all foreign Entertainments; --- they retain the Name alone of

*Italian Comedy* ; the Performers of it are their own Natives : Nay, the Performances are chiefly their own Produce. Their Operas are entirely *French*, and some Years ago, when an *English* Company attempted to exhibit in *France*, they were expressly prohibited :--- About four or five Years ago, when a famous *Burletta* Company perform'd in *Paris*, --- their Success undid 'em ; --- their Partifans grew too numerous :--- And when a Paper-War arofe, contending for the Superiority of *French* and *Italian* Music, --- the Government order'd the *Italians* to decamp : Declaring they could never be idle disinterested Spectators, of any Innovation, by Foreigners, on the Bread of their own Natives.

— The same laudable national Preference has appear'd, in behalf of their own Artists, on many Occasions ; even in making their Fireworks (on Occasion of the Peace) against all *Italians*, or Foreigners, whatever : --- An Example well worthy an *Englishman*. --- Nor need we blush to copy the Virtues, even of our Enemies ; since, as *Shakespear* fays, ---

“ Thus

“ Thus may we extract Honey from a  
“ Weed,

“ And make a Moral of the Devil himself.”

How great had been their Indignation, if an arrogant Director of any Theatre in *Paris*, had (by his Treasurer dispatch'd to *England* for that Purpose) exported near Six-and-thirty Thousand Livres, to enlist a Regiment of *English* Dancers, to come over, on the uncertain Hazard of being liked, while several of their native Actors were unemployed? --- What would have been their Resentment to a Manager, who should thus lavish their Treasure on Foreigners, --- tho' he would not, for all the Authors in the Kingdom (into whose Works he had not thrust his own Harpy-Fingers) advance one Thousand Livres; — no, not one Thousand Pence? — There, a Stage Manager, had not dar'd to have attempted such a Thing; — so great and dangerous would be the Resentment on such an Occasion.

No Performer is received into a Company there, but by the joint Concordance of the Public; that gain'd, he is regarded as a

Servant of the Public ; and never discharged the Theatre, but becomes a Sharer in the Profits, which is divided among 'em ; after a Deduction, made towards the Support of the Hotel Dieu, and other public Charities.

To return to what happen'd here, on Account of the *French* Dancers :— Whatever might be the Resentment of those Gentlemen, who were for opposing their Appearance in such Numbers, at so critical a Juncture, when the Minds of Men were naturally inflam'd, against an insidious Enemy, who premeditated a daring Invasion of our Country ; yet, 'tis probable, not one of those Gentlemen, but pitied each individual momentary Sufferer ; tho' they were determin'd to shew their Resentment, against the Manager, — in hopes, perhaps, that having first drove *Gallican* Importations from the Stage, the laudable Example might have been follow'd, in every other Circumstance of Life.

The coxcombly Writer of this Letter (whoever he be, 'tis the softest Name can be

be allow'd him) abuses, and affects to despise our worthy Citizens of *London*, for what they ought to be rever'd; their Application to Trade:— An Employment that brings Honour, as well as Profit, to themselves; as indeed, Traffic is reckon'd, by all Rationals, to add to the Power of the Crown, and Dignity of the Nation.—

Previous to this, — this curious Coxcomb bestows a fulsome Compliment to our little great Man, p. 13. — “*Y-a-t-il un A<sup>cteur</sup> en Europe?*” — I shall endeavour to give the *French* an *English* Translation, — the Language that probably it was first wrote in; — tho' it was pretended to be sent from *France*, 'tis a Question, whether the Printer did not receive the Manuscript from the *Environs* of *Covent-Garden*.

But to the Letter Writer: — Says he, — “ Is there in *Europe*, an Actor who has “ made himself so great a Name, as the ce- “ lebrated Actor you have insulted, by a “ Behaviour as gross, as brutal ?” — (“ Great “ indeed ! and very civil, *Monfieur.*”) — He goes on — “ Be it your Glory to

“ possess a *Roscius*, --- let not a *Baron* be  
 “ rais’d above a *Garrick*, --- I agree with  
 “ you --- I rejoice in your Rights” : --- Is it  
 possible to believe a *Frenchman* could write  
 this? Would any *Frenchman* allow a Prefe-  
 rence to be given any *English* Performer, to  
 their justly admir’d darling *Baron*, --- any  
 more than they would praise any King of  
*England*, at the Expence of their well-  
 beloved Grand Monarque ?

This pretended *French* Writer also falsely  
 asserts, “ that *Englishmen* form’d themselves  
 “ into Societies, meerly to oppose *French*  
 “ *Dancers*;” --- and p. 18. ---- he says, ---  
 “ from this Motive have arisen so many  
 “ different Societies, so many Clubs of dif-  
 ferent Sorts of People, under the pom-  
 “ posus Title of *Anti-Gallicans*; — in  
 “ Time, each *Englishman* shall become an  
 “ *Hannibal*, who, with their Families, shall  
 “ swear at the Altar, an eternal Hatred to  
 “ every Thing call’d *French*: --- O boyish  
 “ Hatred! O contemptible Jealousy! --- if  
 “ we may judge by what happen’d to *Car-  
 thage*, of what may be the Fate of a  
 “ Country, unable to disguise it’s Hatred,

“ we

" we may prophesy very unfortunately of  
 " these despicable *Anti-gallicans*." --- This  
 Arrogance is so truly *French*,---it tempts one  
 to suppose no *Englishman* could have a Hand  
 in it : --- One would scarce imagine, a naturalized  
 Subject of *England*, tho' even of  
*French* Extraction, could be guilty of such  
 Abuse, --- and dare to brand a Set of worthy  
*Britons*, as the Fore-runners of their Coun-  
 try's Ruin, because they endeavour to dif-  
 fuse a noble patriot Spirit thro' the Nation ; ---  
 the best Barrier of our Constitution : --- Yet,  
 these Men, he insolently calls, --- " head-  
 " long Torments of boyish Hatred, incapa-  
 " ble of aught, but Noise, and Rhodo-  
 " montades." --- After this, he pretends to  
 prove, that the Dancers, Fidlers, Cooks,  
 Valets de Chambres, Friseurs, Taylors, and  
 Footmen, which *France* does us the Ho-  
 nour to send over in such Numbers, must  
 certainly enrich our Nation ; — as there is  
 scarce a Man of 'em, but brings almost  
 twenty Shillings in his Pocket. What an  
 Acquisition of Wealth ! how delectable a  
 Counterbalance to the Sums they gain here

(while

(while our own Countrymen are unemploy'd) and what an Emolument to the Nation ! as 'tis well known, scarce a Beggar of 'em, but soon puts on the Habit of a Gentleman, and generally departs, --- with his Coat Gallonè, and his Pockets well lined.

Tho' the Policy of the *French* makes 'em endeavour to become our Rivals in Trade, — yet this wise Letter-writer would insinuate, the Extention of Commerce will be our Ruin. P. 23. — He cries out, --- “ Insatiable Desire of Gold ! how hast thou blinded Nations ! — how do a People, who apply themselves to the Spirit of Commerce, become interested ! — and from thence, become mean ! — Is it happy for a State to extend, and aggrandise their Commerce too much ! --- would it be any hurt to confine and limit it ?” So we may conclude, that our dear Friends, our faithful Allies, the ever honourable *French*, mean only to circumscribe, or defeat our Traffick, out of their immense, and most incomprehensible Kindness to us. 'Tis to be hoped, we shall hardly take their Word, though, --- and, whatever this prating Gaf-coon

coon would insinuate to the contrary, the Natives of this Sea-Girt Island will not readily forget our Navy is our best Bul-walk ; that our Traffick is the best Support of that Navy : That not only Riches, but Power, and Glory, are added to this Nation, by its extended Commerce. With that our Arts and Sciences encrease : In *you* then, GENTLEMEN, we *trust* for an Amendment of our Taste, by a *sensible Correction* of our PUBLIC DIVERSIONS, when Leisure from more important Avocations allows you Time for your Amusement in our THEATRES.

'Tis true, — it well may prove your Power to effect it ;  
And yet, methinks, 'twere Folly to suspect it.

What cannot Bodies join'd, like yours, obtain,  
Ye lordly Merchants of the *British* Main !  
Well may your Influence mend, and raise their Station ;  
Since *Europe* knows, 'Tis you support our Nation.

Free Trade the vital Streams of State supplies,

And when that Course is stopt, the Body dies.

Look Ages back, our happiest Kings must own

Traffick the brightest Jewel of their Crown !

While Trade protected is their ample Scheme,

From your fair Profits Greatness flow to them !

Since then this happier World your Influence feels,

To you, before false Taste, too far prevails

The Stage, the World in Miniature appeals :

Drive all Dramatic Pirates from that Coast,  
Nor let the Trade of staple Sense be lost.

While you judiciously Applause shall give,  
Who know so well to laugh, so well to grieve,

Nature again shall take her Turn to reign,  
While *Frenchmen* dance, and Eunuchs squeak in vain.

Britons attend, the noble Cause pursue;  
 While Wit you honour, Wit shall honour  
 you ;  
 And every sneering Foreigner convince,  
 You may like Novelty, but still love Sense.

Having perused, in the first Number of the *Universal Visiter, or Monthly Memorialist*, lately publish'd, --- a Letter, thro' the fictitious Intelligence of the revived Mr. *Bencraft*, from Mr. *Betterton*, to Mr. *Garrick*, many, whom I read it to, declared, from the Manner it was couch'd in, it might be taken as well for Irony, as Panegyric.

I continued musing thereon just before I lay'd me down to Rest, and as our Dreams are frequently a Repetition of our Transactions, or Meditations of the Day, I found myself (pray Gentlemen observe, 'twas but in a Dream) in the *Elysian Shades*, among the deceas'd Worthies; two illustrious Appearances first attracted my Eye, — *Shakespear*, and *Betterton*; — the Poet holding, wiith Disdain, a Scrip of Paper, on which was, in legible Characters, the Letter abovementioned.---He ask'd that great Actor, --- “ If 'twas possi-  
 “ ble

“ ble he could advise a Fidgetter, a Mani-  
 “ kin, to dwindle away *Othello* ? A Cha-  
 “ racter which required all *Betterton's* Digni-  
 “ tity of Deportment, or Powers of Elocu-  
 “ tion, to support.”

*Betterton* read the Epistle, then submis-  
 sively bow'd, and assured his *Inspirer* on the  
 Scene, that was the first he ever knew of  
 the Letter ; that it must be written by the  
 Person addressed to, or some of his menial  
*Hirelings*, who are dear to him, in Proportion  
 as they abuse, not only his Cotempora-  
 ries, but all preceding *Actors*, whether  
*Greek* or *Roman*, or *French*, or *English*.

--- He farther said, “ By all Accounts that  
 “ I have heard, from the Judicious on  
 “ Earth, his acting *Othello* was rather  
 “ Tragi-comic.” --- While his salaried Clap-  
 piers deafen'd the Audience,

Cried, the Judicious, in a Rage,  
 “ Where is *Othello* ? That's his Page,”

At this, *Shakespear* smiled Reconciliation  
 to *Betterton*, informing him, that to afford  
 a Scene of Diversion, to all the great Dra-  
 matists below — this mock *Roscius*, and some  
 of

of his chief Evidences, were summon'd from above, to attend, ---

Soon as on one Hand the illustrious Shades had seated themselves, on the other a Noise of Petulance, Jabbering, and Diffonance, was heard.

The Heralds of the Court cried, " the orderly Clapper-men and hir'd Puffers of *Drury-Lane* attended ; " — such as swear themselves black in the Face, that there was never any Thing, nor is, or ever shall be, equal to him. The foremost was a tall, meagre, heavy, snuff-daub'd, Horror of a Man, who wou'd never have ceas'd his monstrous Fibbs, but that he 'spied the Spectres of certain Thief-catchers, dispatch'd after him, furnish'd by the Furies with Whips, who thought it an Office beneath themselves to chastise such a Retrograde from Truth and Justice, — who ever prais'd or satyris'd, as mercenary Views or Spleen, inspir'd him. The second was the ragged headed Form of a younger Man, with the Face of *Minerva's* Bird, and husky Bark of a Dog, that had got cold, with two written Papers, one fix'd on

on his Breast, the other on his Back ; on that on his Breast, was---“ Abuse on any Person---Price Half-a-crown ;” on the Paper behind,---“ Praise on the same Person for three Shillings :”—His Excuse for the former was, that of many Culprits at the *Old-Baily*,---his Youth, Want of Cash, an huge Appetite, dirty Passions---and an Ambition for a clean Shirt :—He alledg’d, that nobody ought to be angry with him, for abusing them ; for that he had calumniated his deceased Uncle, to whom he ow’d his Education ; as also one of his best Friends, who oft supplied him with Lodging, Food, Raiment, Cash, and all Necessaries, for many Months ; that, for his Part, he had no Malice to any Person,---that he never threw Dirt but when he was paid for it ; what wou’d they have a Man do ? That he was willing to wash it away, when made worth his while,---and sure that is fair.

The whole Consistory turn’d with Aversion from the infamous Avowal.---By Order of the Court, he was sentenced to Earth again, there to be confin’d in a Garret, in the Parish of St. Giles ;—where some *Curl* of the

the Times should allow him Board and Lodging, and Six-pence on a *Sunday*, while he confin'd himself to writing Poesies for *Bath Rings*, Anagrams for Cutlers, Verses for the Bellman, and Intelligence (with critical Remarks) for *Grub-street* Journals:— He then withdrew.—The Furies hiss'd him as he pass'd,—the triple-headed *Cerberus* bark'd Abhorrence, and chased his stigmatised Venality, and Dastardliness, far from the sacred Precinct.

A horrid Discordance grated every Ear,  
utter'd thro' Cow-horns, from the boisterous  
Lungs of *Clare-Market* Butchers; and their  
Slaughterers, the good Allies of *Drury-Lane*,  
frequently call'd upon, as of late, to knock  
down, and maim Citizens of *London*, in be-  
half of *French* Strollers.

The Heralds cried aloud,—“ The Man  
“ unparalell’d in present Times, Antiquity,  
“ or Futurity, is arrived ;” the Assembly  
rais’d themselves to view this Chief of Hu-  
manity,---they look’d forward, but could not  
discover any Thing :---Upon Enquiry, they  
learn’d, he was hid among the Crowd of  
Horn-blowers and Puffers, attending him ;

they were ordered to fall off, and make an Opening for him on both Sides, when they discovered a petit Figure,—not so much to the Admiration of the Court, as *erst* *Æneas* stood breaking from the Cloud, before the enamour'd *Dido* and wondering *Carthaginians*.—They look'd down at him, and seem'd surpris'd,—but 'twas a Surprise of Disappointment.—A Respect for themselves prevented them breaking out into a general Laughter. — By Order of the presiding Powers, the most famous Actors were ordered to accost the newly-arriv'd Original ; the *Greeks* and *Romans* declined the Office, as being totally unacquainted with him : They said, “ It was more the Busines of his “ Countrymen ;—” at which *Betterton*, with a serious and penetrating Aspect, and a commanding Mien of Majesty, drew near, and saluted him with imperial Dignity ; —then turn'd off, with a mix'd Smile of Scorn for the Object, and resentful Compassion for his Country, to have exposed itself so much in his Behalf.

The next who approach'd was *Booth*, —  
 “ Grace was in all his Steps, Spirit in his Eye ;  
 “ In all his Motions Dignity and Ease.”

In that majestic Manner he advanced, as he used in *Pyrrhus* passing to the Throne ; he just condescended to nod a cold Salute, and look'd down on him, with that condescending Superiority he had over *Orestes*, on his despised Demand to sacrifice the *Trojan* Boy.

— The third that came lightly forward to the Sound of Musick, was *Wilks*, in his favourite Character of Sir *Harry Wildair* :— A joyous Murmur fill'd the pleased Assembly, on his Appearance ;— with spirited Volubility, he demanded,---“ Well, what News from “ *London*? How does my old Friend *Colley* the “ Laureat? Long have the Famous of every “ Theatre, of all Ages, and all Climates, ex- “ pected him here :” ---He was inform'd (and was pleased to hear it) the Laureat, tho' retired from the Stage, was still happy enough (in a very advanced Age) to enjoy Spirits sufficient to give and receive Pleasure among the polite, tho' chearful, Lovers of social Conversation.—“ Where then, he cryed,

“ is this *nouveau Arrivé*?”---Being shewn to his disappointed Eye,—he turn’d instantly aside, to divert a rising Laugh, and humming a Tune, with careleſs Gaiety, he left the Place.

Like *Fribble* in the Farce, the Mimic-Hero all this while stood trembling---amaz’d at the Novelty of Beings he had no Idea of.

Our Attention was immediately drawn to a Grove of Cypres, from whence proceeded a handsome manly Form, who emphatically spoke,—

“ When the Immortals on the Billows rode,  
“ And I myself appear’d the leading God”.

He advanc’d—and scoul’d Indignation on the Buffoon-Cause of his blasted Laurels, and hasten’d Death,—then, looking him thro’, he cry’d—

“ Say, thou foul Thief, thou Murderer of my Reputation, as in the best thou art, what Quarter can’t thou expect from this Congress of the truly Meritorious, who, satisfied to gain Applause by their own Abilities, never thought the mean Mimickry of another Man’s Foibles cou’d enhance their Desert?”

Desert?" The Cause of Complaint being communicated around, this Assassin of other Actors was order'd to display his own Powers:—Something like a Stage was instantly erected, which he was ordered to ascend, and to give 'em some tragic Specimens of his Abilities.—There he stood sometime, like *Gulliver* before the *Brobdingnians*, and not beginning,---the Cause of his Delay being ask'd,---he replied, "he wanted " a Hat—without which there was no ex— " pressing the Passions."—The old Tragedians declared, " they never knew the Ne— " cessity of any such Thing :"—But a Hat was got for him, which he began most cruelly to bruise and to compress ;—a Sort of Purloin from *Harlequin* :—The fast-clutched Hat was twitched from Hand to Hand, frequently drawn cross the Eyes of the (thereby) startled Person he spoke to ;—then, with both Hands, was moulded on his Stomach, and with ungraceful Vehemence flapped upon the Thigh : This was called " The theatrical Exercise " of the Hat." His Tones of Distress too often over-strained, like those of a greensick puling Girl, soon grew hoarse with affected

Lamentations ; his Anger was a Mixture of Flurting, Jerking, and Bouncing : His favourite Gestures were a hasty Shrugging of the Shoulder-bone, a sudden Dart of his Right-hand to his Left-breast, as if there bit by a Flea, or a Slap therewith on his Thigh, as if seized with a Cramp ; sometimes a distorted throwing back of his Left-arm, as if contracted ; his Right-hand often concealing his Eyes, which ought to display the Passion to the Spectators, if he feels any,—which may be doubted, from the too frequent Use of that Action ;---if he does not feel, that quick Clapping of his Hands to his Eyes is but a cunning Expedient of Quackery in Acting : It may impose on the Vulgar, while laugh'd at by Connoisseurs.

Nothing evinces Want of Genius, Invention, or Taste, more than an awkward Imitation, or improper Application of what may have been universally admired Beauties.

The *Greek Painter*, in his Piece of the Sacrifice of *Iphigenia*, having adapted Passions in Gradation to the Difference of Interests of the Characters presented ; as,—among others, *Calchas* the Priest,—*Achilles* the Lover,

--*Clytemnestra* the distracted Mother,---when he came to delineate *Agamemnon* the Father, finding no Expression adequate to the Idea he had conceived of his paternal Grief, he veil'd the Father's Face from View, leaving it to the Spectators Imagination to supply what he perceived his Art unequal to express: This ingenious Despair has been admired by the Virtuosi of all Times and Countries, —but has been often abominably imitated, by prophane Medlars in the polite Arts. Two Instances shall suffice for the present.

One of 'em, a tasteless Writer, giving an Account of his Travels thro' *Italy*;—at the Article of *Venice*, says, “ When I saw that “ wonderful City immerge, as it were, from “ the Sea ;—its magnificent and lofty Build-“ ings, resting, in a Manner, on a watry “ Foundation ; I was so agreeably surprised, “ that, like *Agamemnon*, I wrapt my Head “ in my Cloak, and could behold no more.” The Man, to be sure, thought this a very pretty Allusion: Was there ever one more impertinent, or ridiculous ? I imagine any one else would rather have indulged his Sight, by feasting on the Prospect ; and

would have been extremely angry with any Person, who should have bound his Eyes, like *Jobson* in the Farce, to fit them for playing at Blindman's Buff, instead of contemplating *Venice*, that foremost of Curiosities:

The Second is this great Myrmidon of the Stage, who, in Imitation of the above famous Piece, no doubt, so frequently prevents our seeing the Shifting of the Passions in his Eyes. Hiding the Face, and particularly the Eyes, is generally faulty in Oratory and dramatic Expression, the Cases, where allowable, very few; therefore the frequent Use of such an Action must proceed from absurd Affectation or ridiculous Ignorance. Having attended to him, some stiled him a grotesque Forshortner of the Passions. Being called upon in the other Walks of tragic Expression, he shewed no great Variety, but a constant Round of the same Gestures, wanting of Dignity in Deportment,—or that Grace of Motion and unaffected Ease, so requisite to finish a compleat Tragedian. His next Trial was in genteel Comedy,—there he appeared an absolute Blank; in the Fop's, as bad; and in the Coxcomb, no better;—in

low Comedy and Farce, he wanted no Power to please, but all his aggrandised Merit in every other Sphere, was found to consist of too much Trick and Quackeries of the Stage, and his Utterance appeared often faulty, by affected paralytic Pauses, and fluttering Stammers. The dissatisfied Assembly rose sudden, all at once, and, --- breaking up, the Court --- took different Ways.

The little Hero's Pride was greatly hurt, that none of the Immortals ask'd him with 'em ; --- awhile he stood aghast, --- and then, endeavour'd to follow *Betterton*, and *Booth* : But, with majestic Step, they had too far advanced, for him to have any Hope of overtaking them. --- He saw *Wilks*, leading *Oldfield* thro' the Crowd ;

Her Elegance of Visage, Form and Mien,  
With Majesty, and smiling Grace, commixt,  
Claimed from the Sensible, respectful Love,

Dapper *Davy* offered to join 'em, — but she smiling, told him, --- “ She chose, for her  
“ Companions, the Elegant, the Polite, and  
“ such, whose Manner was expressive of a spi-  
“ rited Delicacy, and genteel Deportment ; --  
“ that he had no Hopes of Admission to their  
“ Society ;

" Society ; unless, reduc'd, for want of  
 " Company, like Mrs. *Sullen*, in the *Stra-*  
 " *tagem*, to take up with *Scrub* the Butler,  
 " in order to make one in a Country-  
 " Dance." While thus he stood despond-  
 ing, --- lost in a fullen Reverie, --- he was  
 pull'd by the Sleeve by one, whom, on turn-  
 ing, he perceived to be his ever-honoured  
 first *Inspirer*, *Momus*.---This Deity claimed  
 him as his own : And told him, " he should  
 " frequently employ him, with Antic-  
 " Jests, and pert Vivacity, to laugh away  
 " the Spleen of the Public." Rejected by  
 all else, he gladly embraced this Invitation  
 from the farcical Deity, ---- whom *Shake-  
 spear* thus addressed : " ---"

" Thou wanton *Inspirer* of Mimicry, and  
 " Buffoonery, henceforward, let not thy  
 " Votaries presume to intrude their Fop-  
 " peries in the tragic Scene ; nor daringly  
 " assume a Right, to lacerate, and massacre,  
 " the Remains of ancient Writers : Never  
 " more let 'em prophane the hallow'd  
 " Scenes of Authors, long since honoured  
 " with the Approbation of a *British* Audi-  
 " ence, by a shameful Intrusion of their  
 " enervate Scribbling.---Let not such ped-  
 " ding

" dling Poetaasters think my Works, on which  
 " the Public Voice have stamped a Merit,  
 " are any more to be mutilated, and man-  
 " gled, under the poor Pretence of pre-  
 " serving 'em : --- Let 'em henceforth ap-  
 " ply themselves to what their little Talents  
 " are more equal ; — let 'em continue to  
 " steal Farces from the *French* ; to scribble  
 " occasional Prologues to such low Pieces ;  
 " --- let 'em indulge their Vein of versify-  
 " ing, — in composing insipid Sonnets,  
 " dull Epitaphs, flimsy Epithalamiums, cold  
 " complimentary Panegyrics, unmoving  
 " Madrigals, stingless Satire, and unpointed  
 " Epigrams.  
 " *Let 'em insult no Merit dead, or living ;*  
 " *Nor MURDER Plays, which they miscall RE-*  
 " *VIVING.*

Shakespeare retired, -- *Mock Roscius* stood aba-  
 shed--- *Minos* stepped forth, — and ordered  
 the Shade of a late departed Bookseller to  
 advance, who, at the Word of Command,  
 unburthen'd himself of a Load of heavy  
 Stuff, which he had sifting some Time sus-  
 tained. — These proved to be Copies of  
 some Pieces, which, this Culprit *Roscius* con-  
 fess'd

fess'd himself guilty of having thrust upon an indulgent, and too partial Town, for many Nights together: Among 'em were, --- the inimitable Comedy of *Gil-Blas*, the incomparable prosaic Tragedy, call'd the *Gamester*, and the sublime *Barbarossa*; to these were added, --- that excellent Droll, of three Acts, called the *Winter's Tale*; the mangled Farce of *Catherine and Petruchio*; --- that childish Masque, called the *Faries*; and that mutilated Play, called the *Tempeſt*, frittered into a mock *English* Opera: --- All these were immediately, by order of *Minos*, laid on a Pile together, --- and burnt, by the Hands of a Printer's Devil. --- Most of the Spirit, and Fire, which formerly animated these last mentioned Pieces, having been entirely extracted by the present curious hypercritical Editor, and malapert Mar-Play, --- and their poor Remains so damped by the Stuff he had crammed into 'em, --- no Flame arose from the consuming Leaves, but they evaporated in a thick Smoak. --- During this Ceremony, News came from Earth, that the *English* Opera, called the *Tempeſt*, was in no Danger of pestering the Town

Town many Nights, notwithstanding the Puffs, and Orders, to support it. This Instance of returning Taste, and the proper Contempt the Public shew'd for these Manglers of *Shakespear*, by forbearing to attend these savage Scalpers of this immortal Bard, diffused a general Joy amongst all the Connoisseurs below : — A loud Applause re-echoed thro' the Place, --- and wakened me : — Yet waking, I found, it was not all a Dream. The Public reassume their Right to judge ; they no longer implicitly approve all the Trash, this crafty Costard-Monger would impose on 'em ; --- nor, on his *Ipse Dixit*, will accept of a Green-Crab, in lieu of a Pine-Apple : --- Even the last new Tragedy, tho' paraded into the World with the usual Puff, of --- “ its excelling all that went be-“ fore it ; ” — not like it's Predecessors, ran rapid on ; — but limpingly endeavour'd to get forward : — At length we found---(as appeared by the *Public Advertiser*.)

“ Great *Athelstan* grew sick, — O fatal  
“ Stroke !

“ Of empty Seats, and Boxes unbespoke !”

A fresh Instance of the unbias'd Judgment of the Public has appeared, in their candid Reception of Mr. *Barry*, in the Character of *King Lear*, and the universal Applause they have bestowed on his excellent Performance. —

This high-drawn Character has been long the Admiration of the Public, --- one Actor having the sole Possession of it, for these fourteen Years past, and having surprised the Town by his spirited, and early Performance of it, — most People were so prejudiced in his Behalf, that many censured Mr. *Barry*, for the Undertaking, previous to his appearing therein ; nay, several as rashly, as ungenerously (on Notice given of the intended Performance) did not stick to call it, an impudent Attempt. — So strong is Prepossession, that, some good natured Persons had their Doubts concerning him. But, to do him Justice, — his Performance has cleared 'em all : — So whimsical were some of these prejudiced Persons, in their Objections, — they even urged he was too tall for the Part ; — yet, I think, 'tis generally

rally allowed, the Advantage of tall Stature is a Beauty in Nature ; it expresses a Kind of natural Dignity. When we read the History of any Monarch, or Hero, we seldom annex the Idea of a little Man ; — unless some Passage, in the History, particularly marks him as such : Nor have I ever heard of any Dramatic Law, or Act of Parliament, to reduce our Kings to the low Standard, in which they are sometimes represented.

I mean no Reflections hereby on any one, who may be disqualified, as myself, for a Grenadier ; — nor do I presume to hint, that a great Mind may not inhabit the small Body of a Man, even of but five Foot five Inches. — Long since it was remarked, “ that daring Souls often dwell in little Men.” Not to give Praise to the little Gentleman, for his Performance, in some Parts of this Character, were doing him Injustice ; there is a quick spirited Manner in his Execution, that often sets off many Passages therein : But, when we consider the chief Characteristick of *Lear*, to be Pride, and Impatience, — a kingly Pride, hitherto uncontrolled,—and an impetuous Temper, as soon susceptible

susceptible of Anger, Rage, and Fury, as Flax is ready to catch Fire ; and in the Expression of those Passions, as quick, and rapid, as the Lightning's Flash : If this is the Case (and I have often heard it allowed) must we not give the Preference to Mr. *Barry*, not only in majestic Deportment, and Gracefulness of Action, but also in his Manner of imprecating the Curse, this injured Monarch throws out against his unnatural Daughter ? Can the Actor be too rapid in the Delivery ? — Do not long Pauses damp the Fire of it, like cold Water dropp'd thereon ? 'Tis hasty, rash, and uttered in the Whirlwind of his Passion ; — too long a Preparation for it, seems not consistent with *Lear*'s Character : 'Tis here unnatural. Such long Pauses give him Time to reflect, which the hasty *Lear* is not apt to do, 'till 'tis too late : — This philosophic Manner would become a Man, who took Time to recollect ; — which if *Lear* did, would not the good King, the o'er-kind Father, change this dire Curse into a fervent Prayer, for his Child's Repentance and Amendment ?

To prepare this Curse with an overstrained Look of solemn Address, long dwelt on, before the Curse begins, makes what the Author designed to excite Pity, and Terror, become detestable, and horrible ; so dire is the Curse, Nature can scarce endure it, unless delivered in the rapid Manner, the wild Transport of the choleric King, with sudden, and unchecked Passion, would surely give it : — When it appears premeditated, — it speaks Rancour, Spleen, and Malice ; a cool Revenge ; not a Burst of Passion, from an o'ercharged Heart. — Whether this Remark is just, is left to the Determination of the judicious Public.

I have seen both these Gentlemen play *King Lear*, within a few Days of one another ; — I must confess, I had Pleasure from the Performance of the lesser Monarch in several Passages : — My Expectation had indeed been greatly raised, by the many Encomiums lavished on him, but were not answered to my Wish : There was a Pettness attended the Performance, which I thought not quite equal to the Character. His Behaviour often liable to Censure, —

particularly, I thought, at the End of those  
 Scenes, where the unnatural Behaviour of  
 his Daughters work him up almost to  
 Frenzy. — Does not the preceding, and fol-  
 lowing Parts, point out to us, that *Lear*  
 rushes wildly from beneath the Roof, where  
 he has been so unhospitably treated? —  
 Why then is he to sink into the Arms of  
 his Attendants? — Thus helpless, as he  
 there affects to appear, — tho' his Daughter  
 turned him out of Doors, surely his At-  
 tendants would have convey'd him to some  
 Place of Rest: Yet, by the Play, we find,  
 he roams into the Wood ---- exposing  
 himself unto the Storm. Besides the Error  
 of this fainting Fit, — let us examine how  
 'tis executed. — His Spirits being quite ex-  
 hausted, he drops almost lifeless, into the  
 Arms of his Attendants: — Do they carry  
 him off? — Why, — No. Relaxed as we  
 may suppose his whole Machine — (for his  
 Head and Body are both thrown extra-  
 gantly behind, as if his Neck and Back  
 were broke) yet his Knees (which in Nature,  
 would most likely falter first) are still so able  
 to support him, in that odd-bent Condition;  
 that

that he walks off, with the regular Stiff-Step, of a Soldier in his Exercise, on the Parade. — Is this consistent? Is this natural? Is this Character? Does not this uncouth Appearance, with his bent-back Body, and dropping Head, rather resemble the uncomely Distortion of a Posture-Master, when he walks the Sea-Crab, as they call it? By the Introduction of such Extravagancies, — he seems to have borrowed a Hint from our Brother *Bayes*, — when he says, — “ I scorn “ your dull Fellows, who borrow all they “ do from Nature, — I’m for fetching it “ out of my own Fancy I.” — And a pretty Fancy it is truly! I question, if it would have entered into the Imagination of any other Man: — But, as *Bayes* again says, — “ It serves to elevate and surprise.” — Thus the Actor is satisfied, if he can gain a Clap from the upper Gallery; — while the Pit, and Boxes, with a silent Shrug alone, condemn such *outré* Behaviour. —

Certainly, the Author meant not this fainting Fit, or that *Lear* should stay to be held: — He rather meant, the King, in Hurry of his Rage, and Grief, stung to the

Heart by those *unnatural Hags*, should fly all Roofs, --- shun all Attendance, --- Pomp, and Ceremony, —— should strive, in his Agony of Soul, to fly himself, --- if possible.

I have been informed (I know not how true it may be) tho' the Story is not unlikely, ---, that when Mr. *Garrick* first undertook the Part of King *Lear*, he went to *Bedlam*, to learn to act a Madman ; --- it had not been a very improper School, perhaps, had he been to have play'd some of the low ridiculous mad Characters, in the *Pilgrim* : --- But as we do not hear of any mad King being locked up there, I do not readily conceive how his Visit, to those elder Brothers of the Sky, could answer his Purpose. —— One might imagine his Judgment (if he has any) might have suggested to him, a considerable Difference, in the Behaviour of a real King, by great Distress, drove to distraction, ---- and the Fantasque of a poor mad Taylor, who, in a Kind of frolick Delirium, imagines himself a King : —— Tho' the Mockery of King *Cabbage* might cause a Smile, with our Pity ; — yet, sure, the deplo-

deplorable Situation of the real Monarch, would rather rive the Heart, than excite Risibility.

I am at a Loss to guess, what End this Visit to the Palace, in *Moor-Fields*, could answer. --- 'Tis probable the most striking Objects he could fix his Eye on, and the most worthy his Attention, are plac'd over the Gate to that Entrance. --- I imagine, no one would think, *Shakespear* would have paid such a Visit, --- to have learn't from the *Medley Jargon* of those unhappy Maniacs, Matter to hve furnished out his Scenes of *Lear's* Madness ! No, --- his amazing Genius, whose extensive Imagination took in all Nature, and, with a Judgment adequate, arranged his Ideas, --- giving proper Sentiment, Language, and Spirit, to every Character : --- When *Lear's* Madness struck his raptured Fancy, " the Poet's Brain, in a fine fiery Fit of Frenzy row-  
" ling," --- wanted not such mean Re-  
sources. ---

I have heard some Persons objected, --- that Mr. *Barry* would want Pleasantry, in the mad Scenes of King *Lear* ; --- I

must confess, I was at a Loss to know what they meant. --- *Lear's* Madness claims a serious Attention, ---- sometimes excites our Admiration ; often moves our Tears ; and ever our Pity, and our Terror : If a Spectator of those Scenes, should be inclined to laugh, might not one suspect, such Spectator had no very delicate feeling ? --- or that there was something absurd, in the Actor's Performance ? It may be observed, tho' *Lear* is turned of Fourscore, yet he sinks not into the enervated, or decrepid old Man ; ---- he no more bends under Age, than as Nature (tho' in Spirit and Health) will, at that Time of Day, sometimes give way to Ease : His Deportment will still express the Monarch. --- We have an Example in a King now living (God grant him long to live) who, from the Blessing of a well preserved Constitution, and an elevated Mind, at a very great Age, still walks erect, and firm, as many of his younger Subjects. ---

I own, I think Mr. *Barry* well deserved the uncommon Applause he met with, in this Part ; --- it may be a Question, whether, in this Character, he has not shewn  
more

more of the masterly Actor, than in all he has done before: --- His Voice was well managed, his Looks expressive, his Deportment becoming the Character, his Actions graceful and picturesque; —— he meant well, and executed that Meaning with a becoming Dignity, and Ease: There appeared, throughout, a well conducted Variety, and spirited Propriety. --- His Attitudes appeared the Result of Nature, and, by a happy Transition from one to another, they seemed not study'd. —— He threw himself into 'em, as if his immediate Feeling, alone directed him to the Use of 'em. Tho' the whole was pleasing, there is a Passage, in the last Act, where his Behaviour deserved particular Notice; —— and wherein he merited that Excess of Applause, the roused Admiration, of an almost astonished Audience, most generously bestowed on him.

When the pious *Cordelia*, as the only Means of escaping the Anguish of a Father's Death, entreats the Ruffians to dispatch her first; which the Villains seem ready to comply with: --- While *Lear* is

with-held, from the vain Efforts, of a fond Father, to preserve his Darling, --- his Action, Look, and Voice, most exquisitely expressed his distressful Situation ; his quick Progression, from Surprize to Terror, thence to Rage, 'till all were absorbed in Anguish, and Despair, —— were Master-Stroke. At length his roused Spirits, catching the Alarm, endeavouring to snatch her from her Fate, --- his Recollection of his unhappily being unarmed, and unable to preserve her, when he throws himself on his Knees, preserving Majesty in his Distress, --- his whole Figure, and Manner, are finely expressive of the reduced Monarch, and Heart-torn Father : All these Gradations of well painted Passions, would task the Power of one of much superior Talents, (much more my small Abilities) to do Justice in the Description. --- To the Ideas, therefore, of your own lively Imaginations, I must leave what I find myself so unequal to paint. And yet the Subject warms me to take farther Notice of his Behaviour. --- When he finds himself restored to his Kingdom, the o'ercharged Heart of the Monarch eases itself, by joyous

Excla-

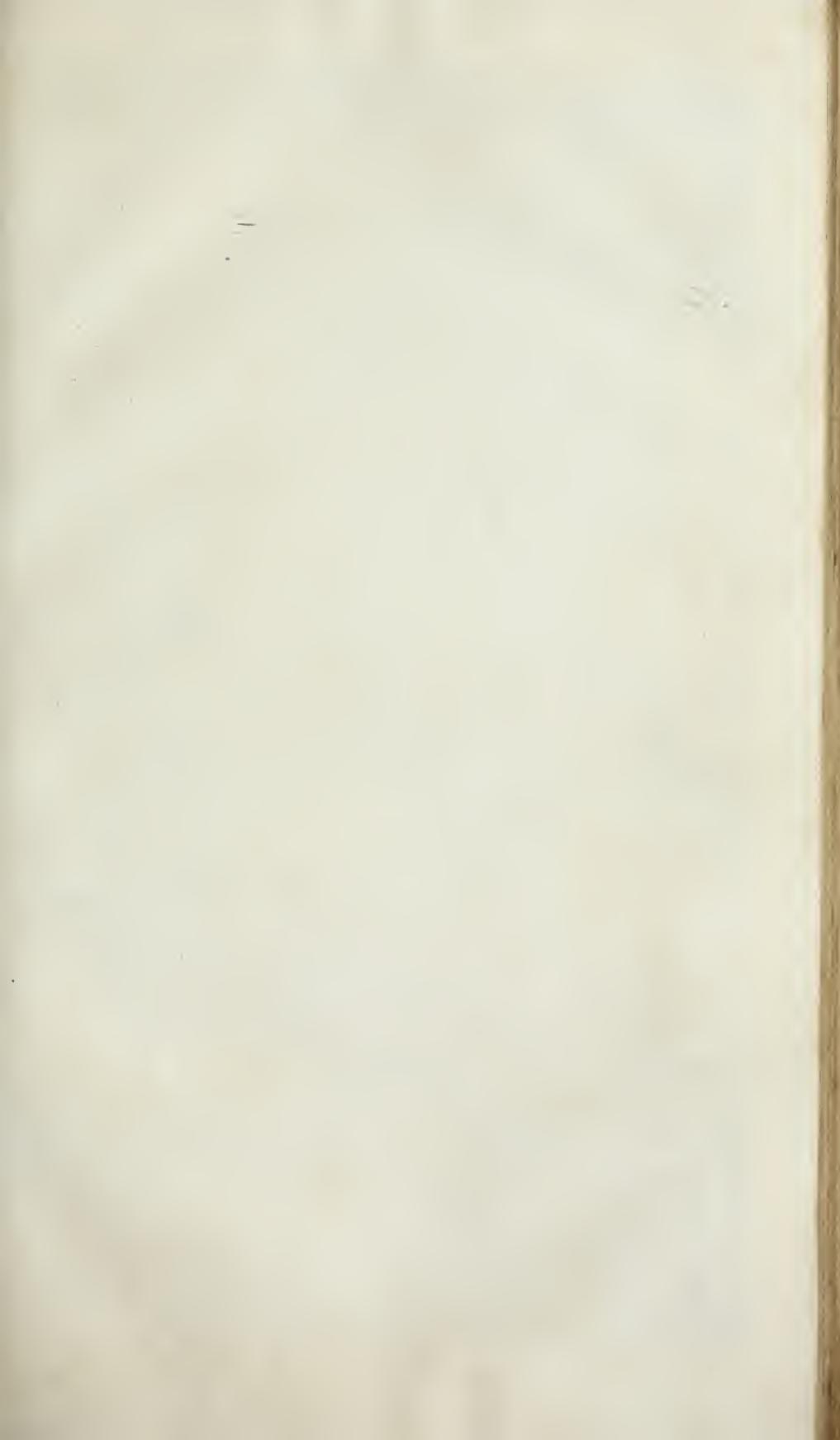
Exclamation. At once, to his delighted Imagination, rush the transporting Ideas of Greatness, Majesty, and Power restored; a Power to revenge, and to reward. This latter Thought he immediately indulges, by declaring his worthy Child, his dearly beloved Daughter *Cordelia*, shall be a Queen: — His distressed Mind, thus suddenly relieved, by so quick a Transition to Joy, may, in that Gust of Rapture, drop a Tear, but 'twill be a Tear of Transport, that joins those wakeful Expressions of Enthusiasm, when he bids “Winds catch the Sound, — “and Nature listen to the Change, — that “*Lear* shall be a King again, and his dear “Child a Queen.” —

The Pride of the Monarch, and Tenderness of the Father, are blended; — he herein supports his Dignity, amidst his softer Feelings. Can then this be properly expressed, by the Whindling of an old fribbling Nykin, when reconciled to his naughty Cocky? I cannot forget, that in the acting of this Play, I met with no small Pleasure from the Performance of my good natured, honest, old Acquaintance, Mr. *Ryan*; the

the Notice a judicious Audience took of him, by the frequent Applauses they gave him, in the well-acted Character of *Edgar*, gave me also no small Satisfaction. — His sensible Attention throughout his Character, whether speaking, or silent, — his happy Feelings, and spirited Execution, were Lessons worthy the Imitation of some younger Players; — who are far from having any Advantage of this Actor, whom, too frequently, they pretend to triumph over, in their familiar Chatterings; and give themselves a Preference, merely on Account of their Youth; — not remembering, at the same Time, their callow Judgment, and Want of Experience: — Yet let 'em know,

“ This Veteran, in *Edgar*, on the Stage,  
“ Sustained the Fire of Youth at Thrice the  
“ young Man's Age.”

There





There has lately appeared in some of  
our public Papers, the following  
Epigram on the two *Lears*.

**T**HE Town have found two different  
Ways, <sup>one</sup> to praise the different *Lears* ;  
To *Barry*, they give loud *Huzzas*,  
To *Garrick* only Tears.

A pretty Conceit ; but how if it is not quite  
true ! — For 'tis as certain that Mr. *Garrick*  
has had other Applauses, besides Tears ; as  
'tis true, Mr. *Barry*, besides loud *Huzzas*,  
has never failed to draw Tears from many  
of his Spectators.

Were it injurious to the Author of this  
Epigram, to suppose he was a little hurt by  
Mr. *Barry*'s Success. — Tho' it may be dif-  
ficult to say, who was the Author ; yet to  
guess who was hurt most by Mr. *Barry*'s Ap-  
plause,

plause, cannot be a very hard Matter to gues.

Permit me therefore to deliver to you a Reply to the fore-mentioned Epigram. — I believe it may fairly stand by the other, and is not the less poignant for its Truth.

**C**riticks attend — and judge the rival *Lears* ;  
**W**hilst each commands Applause, and each  
your Tears :

**T**hen own this Truth, — well he performs  
his Part

**W**ho touches, — even *Garrick* to the Heart.

*Congreve* makes *Witwou'd* say, — “ Contradictions beget one another like Jews.” — The Simile may hold on this Occasion in regard to Epigrams : I have had two sent me on this Subject, which I shall venture to repeat, tho', since they were sent to me (as was the last) they have made their Appearance in some of our public Papers, —

**W**hen kingly *Barry* acts, — the Boxes ring  
**W**ith echoing Praise, — “ Ay, every Inch a  
“ King.”

**W**hen

When *Garrick* dwindling whines, —

Th' assenting House

Re-whispers aptly back, — — — “ a Mouse,  
“ a Mouse ! ”

“ *Qui invidet minor est.* ”

*Shakespear* ! arise --- and end the warm Dis-  
pute,

Bid Malice cease to snare, -- and Wits be mute.  
If both the *Lears* have Merit in thy Eyes,  
On both smile gracious, and divide the Prize :  
Of future Worth let Candour be the Test ;  
*Who envies* most shall be but *second Best.*

Will it not be a Matter of some Surprise to the Public; --- that an Actor of such improving Talents, and happy Abilities, as *Mr. Barry* is avowedly possessed of, should be rejected by any Manager of a Theatre ? — Should any personal Picque, or Prejudice, prevent the Director adding to the Strength of his Company, or to the Variety of the Town’s Entertainment ? Is any of our Theatres so rich in Actors, as not to need any Performer, who has stood the Trial, and passed the publick Approbation ? --- But, perhaps, the great Vanity, and little Fears,

of the Player, got the better even of the Avarice of this Manager; --- and rather than have so powerful a Competitor (in Tragedy especially) under the same Roof, he chose to forgo (heart-breaking Thought !) even the Lucre that must have accrued to the Manager from such an Actor's Performance: Yet, that this Stage-Director might have had this Actor in his Company, is a Truth, the Patentee can scarcely be hardy enough to deny, while Mr. *Barry* is living to assert it.

In my View of the two *Lears*, I have rather chose to dwell longer on the Excellencies of one Actor, than on a closer Observation on the Defects of the other; --- for, *sic* tho', as the Duke of *Buckingham* observes, —

'Tis great Delight to laugh at some Mens  
Ways,

Yet 'tis much greater --- to give Merit Praise.

I shall make bold, Gentlemen, to conclude this Essay, with a Sort of Parody of a very short Epilogue, to one of *Ben Jonson's* Comedies.

The

The Seas'ning of a Piece is th' Applause ;  
If strict Regard to just theoretic Laws  
Is here preserv'd --- your Dissertator stands,  
Hoping a kind Dismission from your Hands.

End of the SECOND DISSERTATION.





THE  
APPENDIX

(Besides several other Pieces)

CONTAINS

Some Matters relative to the STAGE,

Not yet made Public;

Some Observations on a BILL once brought  
into P---t, to restrain the Number of Play-  
houses;

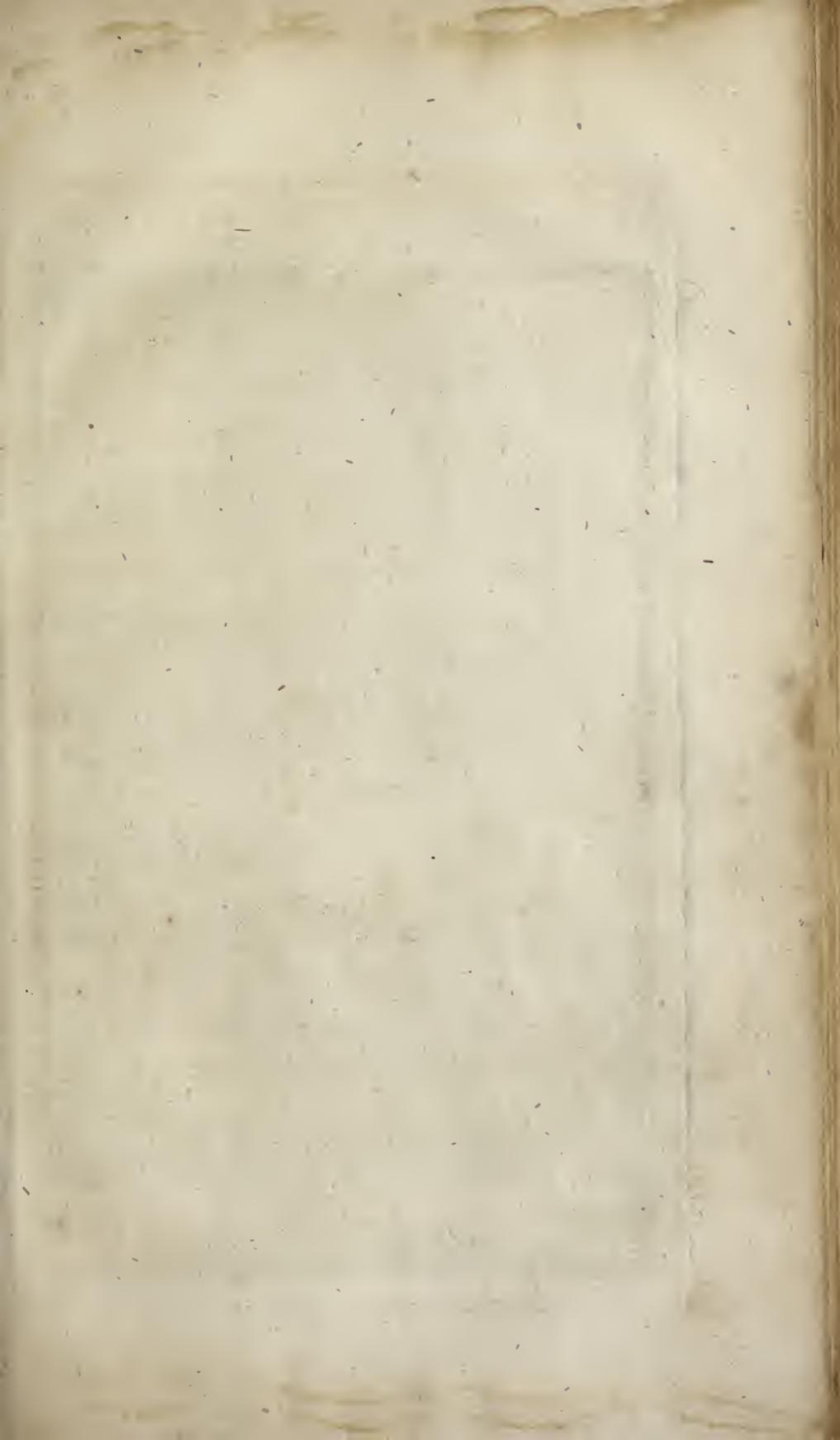
ALSO

A general Review of the Laws relative to  
to the THEATRES, and Remarks thereon; and  
a memorable Speech, delivered in a great As-  
sembly (previous to the Passing of the P---y-  
H---se A---t) by a very great Man;

*“Who, as he spoke, would take the prison’d Soul,  
“And lap it in Elysium.”*

MILTON’S COMUS.

S the following Epistle speaks the  
A Occasion and Necessity of the fore-  
going Dissertations,---it may not be  
improper to give it again to the Pub-  
lic, as Part of the Appendix :---I have ad-  
joined thereto some Petitions and Addresses,  
on the same Occasion ; to which, not having  
had the hoped-for Answers, which many  
Persons of the first Rank and Distinction  
thought I might reasonably expect, I have  
undertaken a Scheme in Trade for my Sup-  
port ; of which the Reader will find an Ac-  
count in the Postscript hereunto annexed.—  
In which Undertaking I doubt not of the  
Favour and Protection of all generous spirited  
Britons, who, as Enemies to Oppression and  
arbitrary Power, have a just Sense of that in-  
valuable Blessing of our Constitution, the  
Liberty of an *Englishman*, supported by *Mag-  
n*1*-Charta*, the *Habeas Corpus* Act, and an  
honest Jury of *Free-Britons*.





A CORDIAL for LOW-SPIRIT'S

*J.V. de Gucht Sculp<sup>t</sup>*

A N

E P I S T L E

F R O M

Mr. *Theophilus Cibber*,

T O

DAVID GARRICK, *Efq;*

To which are prefixed,

Some occasional Verses, Petitions, &c.

— Lowliness is young Ambition's Ladder,  
Whereto the Climber upwards turns his Face ;  
But when he once attains the upmost Round,  
He then unto the Ladder turns his Back,  
Looks in the Clouds, scorning the base Degrees  
By which he did ascend. SHAKESPEAR.

*Let them not say in their Hearts, Ah, so we would have it :  
Let them not say, we have swallowed him up. Ps. xxxv. 25.*

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# P R E F A C E.

T O T H E

# T O W N.

—Now if I hold my Tongue, I shall give up  
the Ghost. JOB, c. xiii. v. 19.



HIS Phrase (the Town) has been made frequent Use of, without any determinate Meaning; and is often considered in a vague, or partial Sense;—ask an Author, or an Actor, separately, what is meant thereby? Each will tell you ('tis probable) that, “by the “Town is meant, the Judging Few,”—as They will style their Friends;—that is, in other Words, those who approve, and cry up,

their several Performances:—Ask the theatrical Managers, they will give that as the Sentiments of the Town, which, perhaps, is only what they wish to have said; such Chat as is echoed, and re-echoed, by their particular partial Intimates, or theatrical Mercenaries:—But to drop them,—I think, the Town may be supposed to include all Degrees of Persons, from the highest Nobleman, to the lowly Artizan, &c. who, in their different Stations, are Encouragers of dramatic Performances:—Thus all Persons, who pay for their Places, whether Noble, Gentle, or Simple, who fill the *Boxes*, *Pit*, and *Galleries*, in a theatrical Sense, form the Town; as *K--G*, *L--RDS*, and *COMMONS*, in a constitutional one, make that great Body, the Nation.

To the Town (in the true Meaning of the Word) I stand indebted for many Favours:—When I consider them, collected as one great Body; I am at a Loss to express my Esteem, Respect, and Gratitude:—Their Smiles have amply rewarded my past Labours;—I have felt their Influence for many Years, through strange Vicissitudes.

tune: As the Servant of the Public, I make bold to publish the following Epistle, &c. whereby it will appear, it shall not be my Fault, if the Remainder of my Life is not employ'd in Endeavours to add to their Diversion.

I grudge no Man his Feast, I only wish to be sure of my own plain Dinner;—Justice to myself therefore, not Ill-will to any one, occasions me to throw my Case before the Town:—I make no under-hand Solicitations;—I form no Parties;—I never did.—I speak openly;—wou'd I had been always as openly dealt with, by those whose undermining Arts, and self-interested Policies, have drove me to my present Dilemma.—I shall only add, I remain, with a most grateful Sense of past Favours, and an humble Hope of future Protection,

*The Town's sincerely oblig'd,*

*Most obedient, and most devoted*

*Humble Servant,*



## INTRODUCTION.

**W**HEN I returned from *Guilford*, in *July* \* last, I found a Discharge from the *Covent-Garden* Manager, left for me at an unusual Time of the Year, and in an uncommon Manner, under the Hand of one *White*, a Servant of the Manager's: I pitied the Man that sent it — so thought him and his Scribe equally unworthy of farther Notice.

I immediately applied to the proper Power for Leave to try my Fortune at the little

\* In 1755.

little Theatre in the *Hay-Market*. — His G——e most kindly signed me a Licence during Pleasure, which I took the speediest Means I could make to Use of. — I had but a little Time to raise a Company, and hastily to instruct some new Pupils whom I was obliged to employ. A little more than a Fortnight after my Licence was granted, with a few unskilled Irregulars, I opened the Theatre, and performed there ten Nights in about three Weeks; I spared no Pains, but Night and Day attended the Business, or I had not been able to have proceeded so far: — My Labours were encouraged, and I gratefully remember the Honour several Noble Personages did me, by frequently gracing the Theatre, with their Appearance, on that Occasion: — I was in Hopes to have strengthned my Company by some additional Forces, as several new Performers (some not un promising) wished to take their Trials under my Tuition; and was not without Hopes of being favoured with some Pieces from some Gentlemen who had before given Speci-

Specimens of their Taste and Humour. — But alas ! when *D. L.* Theatre opened, I was ordered to stop awhile ; —— Some-what farther passed on this Head, which I cannot so readily communicate : —— But, my Epistle, addressed to Mr. *Garrick*, ex-plains it. ——

I ceased not to petition, and solicit Leave to continue. —— While the D. of *G.* con-tinued at *New-Market*, I employed a Morn-ing, in the following Attempt at a Trans-lation, or Imitation, of the first Ode of *Horace* ; —— 'Twas sent to the D —, and not unkindly received ; —— I then pub-lished it in some of the Papers. —— Here it follows, with the prefixed Letter printed with it.

## L O N D O N.

*To the AUTHOR, &c.*

S I R,

THOUGH I flatter myself I have some Taste for the Poetry of others, — yet I presume not to boast any great Talents that Way myself; — 'tis not the Vanity of an Author, but a more grateful Motive, occasions me to publish the following ODE: — 'Twill be no Mortification to me, should the Criticks pronounce me no Poet. — While the Candour of the Town allows me to be an Actor, — and the Continuance of their Favours, with the Protection of the Great, permits me to get my Bread by my Profession. — Such Indulgence gratifies the utmost Ambition of,

*Their most obliged, most devoted, and,  
SIR, Your most obedient Servant,*

T. C.

*An*

*An IMITATION of the FIRST ODE, of the  
FIRST BOOK of HORACE,*

*Humbly Inscrib'd to*

*His G — the D — of G —,*

*By his most obliged, most obedient, and most devoted  
Servant,*

THEOPHILUS CIBBER, COMEDIAN.

“ ‘Tis a Crust, a lasting Crust, for your Rogues,  
“ the Criticks, &c.”

Vide BAYES, in the REHEARSAL.

O D E.

ATTEND my Patron, Joy, and Pride,  
G — N, to ancient Kings ally'd.  
While o'er Newmarket's spacious Plain,  
Swift-footed Steeds for Vict'ry strain,  
Their Riders, proud t' have won the Odds,  
In Fancy, lift themselves to Gods :  
If giddy Crowds, a noisy Crew,  
Their wanton Caprice should pursue,

And

And raise some Upstart, from the Dust,  
 To honour'd Offices of Trust ;  
 Another find his Coffers fraught  
 With Riches, by Advent'ers brought ;  
 A third, mean while, his own Estate,  
 Careful, delight to cultivate ;  
 All *India's* Wealth could not prevail,  
 On such, o'er swelling Seas to sail :  
 When stormy Winds, with shudd'ring Blast,  
 Shiver the Sheets, and shäke the Mast,  
 The Merchant, at his rural Seat,  
 Blesses his little calm Retreat ;  
 But, when the Tempest's Rage is o'er,  
 He quits the Safety of the Shore,  
 Refits his Vessel, dares the Sea,  
 Dreading disgraceful Poverty :  
 The jovial Toper, with Delight,  
 Wastes, o'er full Bowls, his Day, his Night,  
 In Indolence, out-stretch'd, oft' lay'd,  
 By dimpled Stream, in cooling Shade ;  
 The Souls of many wake to War,  
 At Trumpet's Clangor, heard from far,  
 Th' Ear-piercing Fife, and thund'ring Drum :  
 While sighing Mothers weep at Home :

The Sportsman keen, e'er Break of Morn,  
 Attends the Hunter's cheerful Horn ;  
 His Heart-felt Joys his Nerves new-brace,  
 Envigour'd by the healthful Chace :  
 Thus each Man's bias'd by his Mind,  
 —— While G——, graciously inclin'd,  
 Permits me try to please the Town  
 (Whose past Indulgence I must own)  
 With small Attempts, and Troop as small,  
 In Play-house smaller than 'em all ;  
 Let those, whom vain Ambition fires,  
 Boast gilded Domes, or lofty Spires ;  
 Contented with my humble Lot,  
 I'LL BLESS my PATRON, in my Cot.  
 With grateful Heart, shall raptur'd THE  
 Exclaim —— “ *I'm bless'd to that Degree!* ”  
 “ *SUBLIMI FERIAM SIDERE VERTICE.* ”

After some Delays, and many Attendances,  
 I delivered a Petition, the Copy of which I  
 have unluckily mislaid, or lost, —— but it  
 was to the same Purpose as one intended to  
 be sent, printed herewith : —— On the  
 D——'s Return to Town, after a long  
 Stay in the Country, I made bold thus to  
 address him.

BLESS'D, Princely Sir, be your Return,  
 Whose Absence left us all forlorn :  
 Benighted Men, who've lost their Way,  
 Thus grateful blest returning Day.  
 Once more I beg—May't please your Grace,  
 Consider my Unhappy Case ;  
 I've told already my Condition,  
 Humbly presented my Petition ;  
 Then — not to press upon your Time,  
 Or pester you with frequent Rhime, —  
 Your Grace's Goodness thus I sue to,  
 Only to say (the Words are few too)  
 “ I GIVE YOU LEAVE.” — Those Words renew,  
 Your Grace dispels my dreary View :  
 So, when the World was wrapt in Night,  
 “ BE IT LIGHT,” — said Heaven, and ALL  
 was LIGHT.

Still I remain'd unanswered — still was  
 in Hopes, as not having been positively de-  
 ny'd — A Noble Lady was apply'd to,  
 who most generously and compassionately,  
 undertook to plead my Cause ; She spoke  
 to it. — She kindly condescended to deliver  
 to his G — the following Lines.

M A Y it please your Grace, these Lines to  
 view ; {  
 Their Merit this --- They're short and few.  
 Anxious, my noble Lord, I wait,  
 To learn, from you, my destin'd State ; }  
 Whether I'm doom'd to Fast or Eat !  
 Tho' Priests, and Doctors, as we're told,  
 May fasting, sometimes, wholesome hold, ---  
 Yet sure, no Curse can Man befall,  
 Like downright Eating not at all :  
 Then *G----n*, not more Great than Good,  
 By Worth ennobled, as by Blood,  
 Will never from that Goodness swerve,  
 Nor sentence any Man to starve.

After some other Applications, ---- This  
 worthy Lady proposed to deliver for me the  
 following Petition.

His G—— the D—— of G——, &c.

The P E T I T I O N of

THEOPHILUS CIBBER, Comedian

Humbly Sheweth,

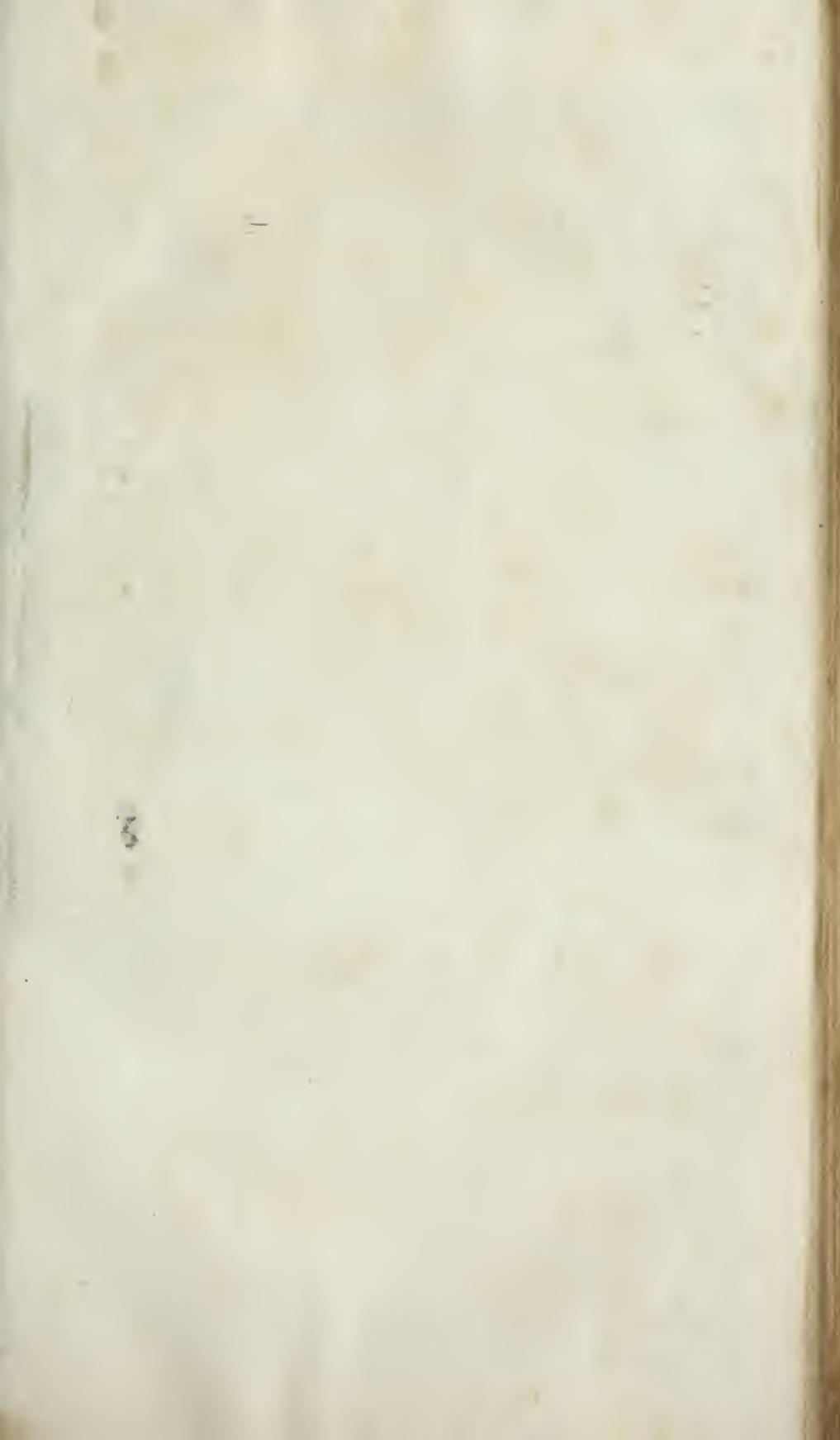
THAT your Petitioner is now in the 52d Year of his Age, 36 of which he has spent in the Service of the Public, whose constant Approbation has encourag'd his Endeavours;

That your Petitioner, thro' the (YET *unaccounted for*) Policies of the Theatres, is excluded Both, while several, his Juniors (by some thought his Inferiors) are getting Fortunes therein :

Your Petitioner, at this late Time of Day, dreading the melancholy Prospects of Starving in, or, at best, out of Jail (from whence he was but lately freed, by the Clemency of the Legislature, on his surrenderring his little All to his Creditors) has no Resource, but to pray ---

Your G---'s wonted Clemency, and Goodness, would please to compassionate the unprecedented Hardship of his Case, and allow him to continue his Endeavours, for the Remainder of the Season, twice or thrice a Week, to get his Bread, by his Profession, at the little Theatre in the *Hay-Market* ; --- which Boon your Petitioner is the more embolden'd to ask, as several of the Nobility and Gentry, his Patrons, wish to see him there : --- And, as *this Act* of your G---'s Generosity *can be of no Prejudice* to others, --- but a Relief to many ; --- and is the only Means to prevent your Petitioner's starving.

THE LADY most humanely appeared concerned for my Condition ; all about her were satisfied, she was in Earnest in my Behalf : --- But, at last --- she was informed, further Application would be to no Purpose. --- Assured of this, I ventured to throw the following Papers before the Public, —— and thought I had a justifiable Right to address Mr. Garrick, in the following Epistle.





Lud. du Guernier inv. & sculp.



# EPISTLE TO Mr. GARRICK.

SIR,

S I am certainly indebted to you for the Negative Answer I have received (after repeated Solicitations) to the Petition, &c. here-to prefixed — Is it not incumbent on me, to return you my public Thanks, for your extraordinary private Favour ? ---- But, is it not possible, some People may think it a little

tle hard, that an *Englishman*, the Son of an *Englishman*, (whose Birth entitled him to a better Fortune than a Playhouse promised, and who, in his Theatrical Capacity, as Author and Actor, has been judged one of the greatest Ornaments of the *English Stage*) --- is it not hard, that his Son, after having spent many Years, with Approbation, in the Service of the Public, should be obstructed in his honest Views, of getting his Bread still in their Service? --- and really, by whom obstructed? May one not reply, by the Son of a *Frenchman*, who, not content with having amassed a princely Fortune, is still jealous a Shilling should be added to a poor Man's Purse, lest his Coffers should not sufficiently run over?

Alas! mistaken Sir, you need not fear being gay in your Palace, tho' I were to smile in my Cottage. ---- Can you really think it reasonable, to have my Head taken from my short Shoulders, that you, my little great Man, may appear the taller? ---- Methinks, you might be satisfied with the Height you have risen to (without obstructing others) as it is well known you are, in a very few Years, in Point of Fortune, become the tallest

tallest Man of your Generation, by many Thousands.

It is a melancholy Reflection for poor *English* Comedians, in a free Kingdom, to consider, they are the only Slaves of that Country ; but, too true it is : --- And to whom are they Slaves ? His Majesty ? No : His beneficent Heart wishes for none. ----- To whom then ? ----- Why, to the Patentees of the Theatres (the Actors Superiors only as Patentees, which they became by great good Luck;) for it is certain, such is their Power ----- that if Want of Judgment, if Pique, or Caprice prevail, they can render the Abilities of the best Performer very useless Qualifications ; they can damn good Performers by their Arts, and push indifferent Ones forward by their Partiality ; 'till such Favourites, growing familiar to the Town (and none better being suffered to oppose them) they pass for Actors of established Merit, and the Epithets *Celebrated*, *Eminent* and *Excellent*, are as wantonly tacked to their Names as in the Marriage Articles of News, when  
 " Master *Aaron Nicknack*, the Son of a ce-  
 " lebrated *Dutch Toyman* at *Wapping*, is

“ married to Miss *Biddy Friffé*, the Niece  
“ of an eminent *French* Barber near *Exe-*  
“ *cution Dock.*”

In how much a happier Situation are the *French* Players, tho' in a Country of hateful arbitrary Power? — Tho' Superstition, and Priestcraft, deny them Christian Burial, yet Humanity denies them not a comfortable Livelihood: — Nor is it in the arbitrary Power of the Directors of the Theatres, wantonly to discharge the meanest of them, without Cause assigned; nay, Provision is made for all Kinds of Performers, who, by Age, or other Accidents, become Invalids, after spending their Time in a theatrical Capacity: — Nor is that Provision such a scanty Stipend, but that it enables them to live with Decency and Comfort. — But you, Sir, may probably know more of this, as your Father, a Native of *France*, was capable of acquainting you more fully therewith.

Think, Sir, what might have been your Situation, with all your Merit (which, believe me, Sir, I am not either ignorant of,

or wilfully blind to) but for the late Mr. *Fletewood's* fatal Indiscretions? — Fatal, unhappy Man, to himself, his Family, and Friends. ---- But for these, which occasioned, at last, his mortgaged Patent to be sold for a Trifle, --- and many other happy Incidents, that all, at once, occurred in your Favour, you might have been in my Situation, Sir; ---- or at best, receiving a Stipend 'Thousands short of your present Income: Since you may remember, a Cartel (of a cruel Nature) was proposed, and near signing, by the then Managers of the Theatres, — when he who became the Patentee of *D. L.* Theatre, and to whom alone the new Grant was first made (and which before had been denied to you) prudently proposed your being a Partner therein; on which Foundation (I do not insinuate *unmerited*) you have raised a noble Fortune: ---- Sir, I have employed thrice the Number of Years, you have, in the Service of the approving Public, --- and am I, Sir, at last, to be stopped in my honest Pursuit, thro' you, Sir? For, Sir, not to mince the Matter, it is thro' you, I know (and you know) I am delayed. Sir, your Po-

licy overshoots itself, as I shall endeavour soon to make appear, by proving my little Attempts at the *Haymarket*, might be of future Use to you. But first give me Leave to hint—I think this Sort of Treatment I have met with, the less supportable, as it is what I never chose to inflict on others, when in Power. Let me dare to speak Truth, without the Imputation of Vanity: I remember not any Opportunity I ever slipped, to encourage any Author; or any Hardship, or Injury, directly, or indirectly, I was ever guilty of, towards any Performer: --- On the contrary, I was ever forward to advance them, to the utmost that could be allowed, whenever their Merit seemed to encrease: — Nor did any Partiality to myself, make me use any sinister Means to obstruct the Rising of another.

When you became a Manager, I was in an Article with your Partner; it was left to your Option to have me as an Actor, at a Salary inferior to what I had formerly received, from Mr. *Fletewood* ---- who found me of Consequence enough to give me equal

to

to any Actor then in being (Mr. *Quin* excepted, whose Merits had earlier procured him a larger Salary than any Performer had received before.) I then persuaded Mr. *Fletewood* (who consulted me on that Occasion) by all Means to add you to the Company, as he then hinted he could have you : ---- And, tho' he had articled with me, to give no other Performer a superior Salary to mine, without mine being advanced equal thereto, I consented he should agree with you, on any Terms he thought fit for his Purpose, and declared I would take no Advantage of such Agreement. ---- You may remember, Sir, our Meeting with you, in order to settle such Agreement. There were present the late Mr. *Fleterwood* and Mr. *De-lane*, Mr. *Cross*, still living, and myself. You may remember too, I declared (regarding you as a young Performer of rising Merit) that any Part I had played was at your Service, only desiring Mr. *Fletewood* to allow me reasonable Time to study some others (which I should not be against acting in the same Plays) that I might not, thro' such

Conde-

Condescension, be thought idle, or become  
useless.

But, to return to my leaving it to your Option whether I should continue in your Company ---- You may remember my waiting on you, at your Lodgings, in *Covent-Garden*, to that Purpose ; ---- nor can you, I suppose, forget the Letter your Partner received from me, on that Head : ---- You must have seen it ---- it related to you both. ---- You best know, Sir, why you then declined my serving you ; ---- I too, Sir, know your Reasons now ; --- I guessed them then ; --- and may, at a farther Opportunity, take more Notice of them. ---- In the Interim, let me remind you, Sir, I have not made Use of that incontestible Power the Law has given me, to deprive you of a potent Assistant, in your theatrical Business ; — Time has taught me to stifle private Resentment, however justifiable, where the Quiet, or Entertainment, of the Public is concerned : ---- I think it not consistent with my Duty to them, to stop their Pleasure in any

one Place, especially when I would wish to divert them myself in another.

Perhaps your superior Policy may arraign mine. But, when *I was a Manager*, which I have been Sir (uncomplained of) of *His Majesty's Company of Comedians*, and might have continued so, had not a mistaken Purchaser bought my Farm over my Head, when I had no Suspicion of such Proceeding; ---- as a certain Set of Renters were lately served ---- a Case not quite unsimilar.

— When I was in the Management of the Theatre-Royal, I neither endeavoured to force any Entertainment on my Spectators, nor took any Methods to prevent their Diversion in any other Place, ---- though frequently urged thereto by my Brother Managers, who often consulted some partial Counsel, in order to suppress other Theatres; ---- which Meetings afterwards occasioned that outrageous Prosecution against Mr. *Harper*, the Comedian (who, by the Way, happened to be a Housekeeper in *Middlesex*, and a Freeholder in *Surry*) and in a most unprecedented, and arbitrary Manner, did

did the strained Power of a petulant *Middlesex* J — ce treat him. ---- Such was it deemed by a then L. Ch. J. (now an Ornament to the still higher Station he fills) who released Mr. *Harper*, on his single Recognition to appear, if his Prosecutors thought it prudent to proceed further at Law :---- This was after hearing many Counsel, learned in the Law, on both Sides, ---- and Mr. *Harper* left the Hall, with the unanimous Joy of several Hundreds, who crowded it on that Occasion.

’Twere ungrateful not to remember an honourable Speech of the Great Man, who then sat on the Bench. --- The Cause was appointed to be heard early in the Morning, when some of the opposite Counsel were for deferring the Pleadings, and treated it as a Matter of little Consequence ; that Great Good Man declared—He thought it a Matter of great Consequence, as the *Liberty* of a *jeſt* was concerned ; ---- that he could not enter on it too soon, ---- nor should he grudge any Time bestowed on it.

This known Fact was some Years before the Law since made, whereby acting is made illegal

illegal (though deemed by no Statute criminal or bad in itself) unless authorised by Patent, &c. from the Crown, or Licence from the Lord Ch——n ; ---- and, that the Legislature did not mean always to confine it to Two Theatres, in this so great Metropolis, is evident from the unlimited Power (as to Number) which that very Law vests in the Crown, and noble Personage, before mentioned. Many Years before this Law I was in the Profession of an Actor --- encouraged by the Candour of the Town ; happy in their Smiles : 'Tis not my Busines here to remark on that Law ; I leave that Task to abler Heads, to whom such Province more properly belongs ---- Nor shall I dwell here on the many theatrical Chicaneries which have been practised against me, when I was most unhappy \* ---- I may have already tired the Reader too much. ---- But, as I before hinted (which let me here explain) that the little

\* I declare, I do not mean, hereby, a general Retextion, on my theatrical Brethren ; none will think it needs further Apology, but those who feel the Smart of its Truth : Such are welcome to wince, and be mifty — and to such I say, — ' *In mine Adversity they rejoiced, and gathered themselves together : Yea, the ABJECTS gathered themselves together against me, and I knew it not ; they did scar me, and ceased not,*' Ps. XXXV. v. 15.

little Theatre in the *Hay-Market* might become a Nursery for young Performers, from whence might be culled, at proper Seasons, new Actors, for the Advantage of the Patentees, and the better Diversion of the Town, is undeniable.— Thus the Trial of such Performers at that Place, might save the Patentees both Expence, Time, and Trouble: The Murmurs of several Authors might also be stopped hereby ---- since many Pieces might be here received, when the Managers of the Theatres Royal might be able to bring forward but few of the Multiplicity with which they are often overloaded; ---- and the Patentees might well suppose, they would ever have the Preference, both as to Performers, and Performances; since that Theatre, from its Smallness, and Situation, could never hope to vie with them, to their Prejudice: ---- Their Apprehensions may be great, but their Danger could be but small. --- Yet, whatever their Fears, is it reasonable, a Monopoly should be made of any one Profession, for the Emolument of two or three alone, — while

— while all the rest must lie at their Mercy ? Would not any Foreigner be astonished to hear that any Set of People, Proficients in any Art (in a free Country) are to work, or starve, at the Will, and Pleasure of one, or two ---- nay, perhaps, as may be determined by some one, who is totally incapable, either by Instruction, or Performance, of furthering, or improving, by Precept, or Example, that Art which he gets an Estate by ? What a cruel Condition would the Professors of all the Sister-Arts be in, thus tyrannically made a Monopoly of, to support the Profusion of a few Ignorants ?

Once more, Sir, let me repeat ---- what would you think, --- what would you feel, ---- thus hard beset as I am ? — Would you think it reasonable that no Portion of that Bread, the Town is able, and willing, to bestow, should fall to your Lot ? — That you should, to gratify the Ambition, or Avarice, of any rich successful Man, when Necessity urges in the latter Part of your Life, (though blessed by Heaven with Health and Abilities)

ties) be prevented from exerting your Faculties in your own Behalf? —— Would you be silent on such an Occasion? —— Would you not let the World know your Condition? Would you not acquaint such as may not have already consider'd it, that this Metropolis is amazingly encreas'd, that Property is greatly diffus'd; that many Families are advanced; —— that all Degrees of People go to Plays, as the most rational Amusement; — that there are near thirty Times the Number of Spectators there were 30 Years ago; — that six Theatres have flourished in one Season, when there were much fewer Numbers to support them; — and that the Town now have but two to go to?

For my own Part, I have but simple *English* Honesty to proceed upon; — whether that will be of as much Service to me as *French* Jesuitical Policy, Time must determine. ---- My remaining Hope is in a K—g, whose Benevolence of Heart, were he but a private Man, would make him one of the first Characters; and whose Virtues, as a Prince,

Prince, it will better become me silently to admire, (while a happy Nation proclaims his Praise) than presumingly to expatiate on.

— If all other means fail (remember, Sir, you urge me to it) I have still the Right of an *English* Subject, to address that great Power, who is justly stiled the Father of his People, who is universally regarded as the Fountain of Goodness, as well as Honour: — I will not therefore despair, of still having Leave to gain Bread for myself, and a little *British* Company, in that Theatre, wherein the *French* Comedians have been more than once licens'd. —

It may possibly be remembered I have sometimes, from the whole Royal Family, excited a Laughter of Approbation. —

Why then may I not hope their condescending Goodness will consider and relieve the anxious Heart of a loyal Subject, who has often had the Honour of making them smile. — I am, Sir, with all due Deference to your Merit, your real Admirer; — and should have been

glad, long since, in a theatrical Capacity, on proper Terms, to have subscribed myself,

S I R,

*Your most obedient, &c,*

**THE. CIBBER.**

**P O S T-**

P O S T S C R I P T.

SIR,

THE Reason of my writing to you at *this Juncture*, is owing to my having received my Refusal but Yesterday Afternoon.

I shall take no Notice of any anonymous Answers hereto ; — but if you think it worth *your* Notice, you may be assured I shall not fail to reply : And I hope Truth will be our mutual Guide : In the mean Time, let me recommend to you the following Text : —

*Do Justice, Love Mercy, and Walk humbly, &c.*

Great Newport - Street,  
Thursd. Nov. 20, 1755.

C. 2

To

and the new world to the right of

10. 23

Jan. 1<sup>st</sup>. 1755.

## To the P U B L I C.

S every seven Years is allow'd to be  
 A a new Stage of Life, consequently  
 the Majority of our theatrical Au-  
 ditors, may be said to be renew'd at the  
 End of every such Period.---As, thro' the  
 little Arts of our theatrical Politicians and  
 Governors, it has been contriv'd, during these  
 last seven Years, almost to exclude me from  
 the Stage, it may not be improper to publish  
 a List of those Parts, in which, for the  
 Course of many Years, I have frequently  
 been allow'd to entertain an indulgent Town  
 ---That I have not oftner appear'd in 'em,  
 of late, is not my Fault.---How I acquitted  
 myself therein, will better become those,  
 who remember me, to declare, than for me  
 to boast.

I hope I shall stand excus'd (in my present  
 Circumstances) if I say, I am ready to take  
 my Round in these Parts, in either of our

Companies ; nor should I fear performing them, alternately, (take 'em thro') with any of our present Actors, to a judicious and candid Audience.

Those Parts, which I have been most us'd to play latterly, I have distinguish'd by printing them in *Roman Capitals* ; and such are the Parts I should not now decline, were I permitted to get my Livelihood by my Profession : But that (without any Reason given) is deny'd me—Though I have been honour'd with the Approbation of the Public as an Actor—was ever willing to be in their Service —and am, thank Heaven, still bless'd with Abilities to continue so—I hope, I am the only Man, in his Majesty's *British* Dominions, so severely circumstanc'd.

Mr. *Gibber*, sen. whose Length of Years and Experience (join'd to his undisputed Talents as an Author and an Actor) give him an undoubted Knowledge of theatric Justice, says, He never knew, nor remembers ever to have heard of, any Performer meeting with such unjustifiable Treatment.

However, I'll not despair,---as I'll not leave untry'd all decent, legal Methods, of obtaining

taining Permission. With a grateful Sense  
of all Favours, I beg Leave to subscribe my-  
self,

*The obliged, obedient,*

*And devoted Servant of the Public,*

T H E. C I B B E R.

PLAYS.

*Agamemnon,*  
*Alchymist,*  
*Alexander,*  
*All for Love,*  
*All's Well that Ends Well,*  
*Amorous Widow,*  
*As You Like It,*  
*Atbelwold,*  
*Author's Farce,*  
*Art and Nature,*  
*Bartholomew Fair,*  
*Bayes's Opera,*  
*Bonduca,*  
*Busy Body,*  
*Comus,*  
*Cæsar in Egypt,*  
*Careless Husband,*  
*Cato,*  
*Chances,*  
*Country Wit,*  
*Committee,*  
*Christian Hero,*

CHARACTERS.

MELISANDER.  
Dapper, and A B E L  
DRUGGER.  
Polypherchon, and Caf-  
sander.  
ALEXAS.  
PAROLLES.  
Clodpole, and B A R-  
NABY BRITTLE.  
JAQUES.  
Oswald.  
The Author.  
Julio, the Savage.  
Cokes.  
Bayes,  
Venutius.  
MARPLOT.  
Second Brother.  
Ptolomy.  
Lord FOPPINGTON.  
SYPHAX.  
Peter.  
Merry.  
Abel and Teague.  
Amasie.

## SIR W. PLAYS.

## CHARACTERS.

<i>Conscious Lovers;</i>	Daniel, and TOM.
<i>Constant Couple,</i>	Beau CLINCHER, and Sir Harry Wildair.
<i>Covent Garden Tragedy,</i>	Lovegirlo.
<i>Country Lasses,</i>	Lurcher.
<i>Country Wife,</i>	SPARKISH.
<i>Cymbeline,</i>	LEONATUS.
<i>Debauchees,</i>	Father MARTIN.
<i>Distress'd Mother,</i>	Pylades, and Orestes.
<i>Don Sebastian,</i>	Antonio, and Mufti.
<i>Double Dealer,</i>	BRISK, and Sir PAUL PLYANT.
<i>Double Gallant,</i>	Finder, and ATALL.
<i>Drummer,</i>	TINSEL.
<i>Fair Penitent,</i>	Lothario.
<i>Fair Quaker,</i>	MIZEN.
<i>Funeral,</i>	TRIM.
<i>Fatal Marriage,</i>	CARLOS.
<i>George Barnwell,</i>	George Barnwell.
<i>Hamlet,</i>	Ostrick, Laertes, Ham- let, and POLONIUS.
<i>First Part of Henry the Fourth,</i>	Carrier, Westmoreland, Francis, King, Prince, and Falstaff.
<i>Second Part of Ditta,</i>	Archbishop of YORK, and PISTOL.
<i>Henry the Eighth</i>	SURRY, and WOL- SEY.
<i>Inconstant,</i>	DURETETE.
<i>Jane Gray,</i>	GARDNER.
<i>Jovial Crew,</i>	Justice Clack.
<i>Julius Cæsar,</i>	CASKA.
<i>King Lear,</i>	Gloster and Gentleman- Usher.
<i>King and the Miller of Mansfield,</i>	King.
	Second

## PLAYS.

## CHARACTERS.

<i>Second Part of King and the Miller of Mansfield.</i>	King.
<i>Lady's last Stake,</i>	Lord GEORGE BRILIANT.
<i>Lancashire Witches, Lottery,</i>	Sir Timothy.
<i>Love for Love,</i>	Lord LACE.
<i>Love makes a Man,</i>	TATTLE.
<i>Love's last Shift,</i>	CLODIO.
<i>Lover,</i>	Sir NOVELTY FASHION.
<i>Mackbeth,</i>	Smart.
<i>Man of Mode,</i>	LENOX, and MACDUFF.
<i>Man of Taste,</i>	Sir FOPLING FLUTTER.
<i>Match in Newgate,</i>	Lord APEMODE.
<i>Merchant of Venice,</i>	Vizard.
<i>Merry Wives of Windsor,</i>	GRATIANO.
<i>Measure for Measure,</i>	Slender, and Caius.
<i>Miser,</i>	LUCIO.
<i>Mock Doctor,</i>	Ramilie.
<i>Modish Couple,</i>	GREGORY.
<i>Mother-in-Law,</i>	Chip.
<i>Mourning Bride,</i>	Headpiece.
<i>Nonjuror,</i>	Garcia.
<i>Old Batchelor,</i>	Dr. WOLF.
<i>Oroonoko,</i>	Sir JOSEPH WIT-TOL, and NYKIN.
<i>Orphan,</i>	DANIEL.
<i>Othello,</i>	Polydore, and CHAP-LAIN.
<i>Papal Tyranny,</i>	Montano, Cassio, Roderigo, Othello, and IAGO.
<i>Pasquin,</i>	Dauphin.
	Trapwit.

## PLAYS.

*Provok'd Husband,**Provok'd Wife,**Recruiting Officer,**Refusal,**Rehearsal,**Relapse,**Richard the Third,**Rival Fools,**Rival Modes,**Romeo and Juliet,**Rover,**School Boy,**She Wou'd and She Wou'd  
Not,**Stratagem,**Silent Woman,**Sir Courtly Nice,**Sir Thomas Overbury,**Spanish Fryar,**Stage Coach,**Tempest,**Tender Husband,*

## CHARACTERS.

Count Basset, Manly,  
Lord Townly, and  
Sir F R A N C I S  
WRONGHEAD.Razor, Constant, and Sir  
JOHN BRUTE.Thomas Appletree, and  
Capt. BRAZEN.

WITLING.

BAYES.

Lory, Young Fashion,  
and Lord FOPPING-  
TON.Tressel, Richmond, Hen-  
ry VI. and RICH-  
ARD.

Credulous.

Toupet.

Romeo.

BLUNT.

Master Johnny.

Octavio, Trappanti, and  
Don MANUEL.

Foigard, and SCRUB.

Sir AMOROUS LA  
FOOL, and Sir  
JOHN DAW.C R A C K, and Sir  
COURTLY.

Somerset.

GOMEZ.

Fetch, Mahone, and  
'Squire Somebody.Ventoso, Mutacho, and  
Trincalo.

NUMPS.

## PLAYS.

*Titus Andronicus,*  
*Timon of Athens,*  
*Tunbridge Walks,*  
*Twin Rivals,*  
  
*Universal Passion,*  
*Venice Preserv'd,*  
*Way of the World.*  
*What D'ye Call It,*  
  
*Whig and Tory,*  
*Wife's Relief,*  
*Wit without Money,*  
*Woman's a Riddle,*  
  
*Zara.*

## CHARACTERS.

Demetrius.  
The Poet.  
Squib.  
Young W O U ' D B E,  
T R U E M A N, and  
Teague.  
Joculo.  
RENAULT.  
WITWOU'D.  
Sir Roger, Peter Nettle,  
and Timothy Peascod.  
Young Indolent.  
Spitfire.  
Shorthose.  
Sir A M O R O U S  
VAINWIT.  
Nerestan.

After this, the Dissertations were frequently  
publickly delivered, and approv'd ; then  
the following Petitions were presented.

To



To his most Ex—t M—:

The Memorial and Petition of THEOPHILUS CIBBER, Son of COLLEY CIBBER,

Most Humbly Sheweth,

THAT the said *Theophilus Cibber* is descended from the antient Family of the *Colleys*, of *Glaiston*, in *Rutlandshire*; his Grandmother being an Heiress of that Family: Her Grandfather, Sir *Anthony Colley*, reduced an Estate, of several Thousands *per Annum*, by his Attachment to the Royal Cause, and raising, and supporting, Troops, for the Service of the Crown.

The said *Theophilus Cibber's* Father, Mr. *Colley Cibber*, was early in Arms, as a Volunteer, under the Marquis of *Devonshire*, at the Time of the Glorious Revolution; to which blessed Event, *England* owes its present

sent happy Establishment, in Church and State : The Succession to the Crown being then fixed in the present Illustrious Family.

The said Mr. *Colley Cibber*, by his Writing, Acting, and Management, is generally allowed to have been greatly instrumental, in bringing the *English Theatre* into Reputation ; his Writings, and public Professions of Loyalty, created him many Enemies, among the Disaffected, — who never fail'd to persecute your Memorialist.

The said *Theophilus Cibber*, has often been intrusted (under the late Mr. *Wilks*) with the Management of the Theatre, and, some Time after, in his own Right, wherein the said *Theophilus Cibber* acquitted himself to the Satisfaction of Authors, of Actors, and of the Publick in general . — And, to the utmost of his Power, ever endeavoured to make the Theatre a School of Morality, and Loyalty.

The said *Theophilus Cibber*, as an Actor, always was happy in the Approbation of his Auditors ; — and has often had the Honour

to

to add to the Diversion of the late King, his present Majesty, and all the Royal Family.

The said *Theophilus Cibber*, in the 52d. Year of his Age, and 37th of his Profession, is now <sup>170</sup> excluded the Theatres, without any Manner of Cause assigned, while several Performers, his Juniors, and Inferiors, receive larger Rewards, and Salaries, than were ever before gained from a Theatre.

The said *Theophilus Cibber's* Hardship, is not only deplorable, but unprecedented.

Your Petitioner therefore prostrates himself before your M—'s known Clemency, and Goodness, humbly praying your M—'s R—<sup>1</sup> Licence to form a Company of Comedians (according to Act of Parliament) that he may get his Bread by his Profession: — Or for such other Relief, as shall, to your Majesty's Wisdom, and Humanity, seem meet.

To his most E—t M—,

The Second Memorial of THEO.  
CIBBER,

Humbly Sheweth,

THAT about two Months since, a  
N— L— presented to your  
M— a Memorial, representing the un-  
precedented oppressed Condition of your Me-  
morialist.

That your Memorialist was commanded  
to wait on Mr. —— of the Back-Stairs,  
for an Answer, where your Memorialist has  
frequently attended.

That the said Mr. —— says, he has  
received no Orders concerning the said Me-  
morial.

Your Memorialist, pressed by the urgent  
Necessities of his Circumstances, implores  
Leave to renew the Prayer of his former  
Petition.

Your

“ Your M——’s Petitioner, prostrates himself before your M——’s known Clemency and Goodness; humbly praying your M——’s R—— Licence, to form a Company of Comedians (according to Act of Parliament) that he may get his Bread by his Profession, — or for such other Relief, as shall to your M——’s Wisdom and Humanity seem meet.”

As the following Address differs not in Matter to the foregoing, — the Reader may imagine much the same Words served the Purpose.

A N

# A D D R E S S

A N D

## M E M O R I A L

T O T H E

N O B I L I T Y and G E N T R Y

O F T H E

C L U B, at Mr. A R T H U R ' s, &c.

*My Lords and Gentlemen,*

METHINKS already I perceive you smile at this drole Beginning of an Address from a Suppliant, — so like the Commencement of a Speech from His Majesty to both Houses of Parliament; — but, as I flatter myself 'tis a Laugh of Good-nature, I will venture to proceed :

C Your

*Your Memorialist them humbly Sheweth,*

THAT he is descended from the ancient Family of the *Colleys*, of *Glaiston* in *Rutlandshire*; his Grandmother being an Heiress of that Family: Her Grandfather, Sir *Anthony Colley*, reduced an Estate of several Thousands *per Annum* by his Attachment to the Royal Cause, and raising and supporting Troops for the Service of the Crown.

— “ HERE, perhaps, you may smile “ again at this parading Introduction ; — “ that is, --- if your Patience has held out “ so far.” ---- To say Truth, --- I borrowed the Hint from Master *Abel* in the *Committee*, who (willing to keep up his Importance with his Mistress *Arabella*) most sagaciously intimates, ---- “ She shall perceive he is “ somebody, ---- altho’ she makes nobody “ of him.” ----

THEN, not to drop our Consequence at once, — permit me, Lords and Gentlemen, to add, ---- Your Memorialist’s Father, Mr. *Colley Cibber*, by his Writing, Acting, and Management, has been generally allowed to have been greatly instrumental in bringing

bringing the *English* Theatre into Reputation ; ---- his Writings and publick Professions of Loyalty often created him Enemies among the Disaffected,----many of whom have not fail'd to persecute your Memorialist.

THE said *Theophilus Cibber* has formerly often been intrusted (under the late Mr. *Wilks*) with Part of the Management of the Theatre,----and some Time after in his own Right, ---- in which Station the said *Theophilus Cibber* acquitted himself to the Satisfaction of Authors, of Actors, and of the Publick in general ; and to the utmost of his Abilities and Power, ever endeavoured to make the Theatre a School of Morality and Loyalty : And the said *Theophilus Cibber*, as an Actor, has been always happy in the Approbation of his Auditors.

Now, as your Memorialist has enter'd in the 53d Year of his Age, and would be in the 37th of his Profession, were he not most unjustly (without any Cause assign'd) excluded the Theatres, — while many Performers, his Juniors and Inferiors, receive larger Salaries and Rewards than were ever

before gain'd from a Theatre ; — and as your Memorialist is still bless'd with Abilities to pursue his Profession, — permit me humbly to intreat you, my Lords and Gentlemen, to use your Interest in my Behalf (in my present unhappy Situation) with his Grace the D— of G—, whose Humanity, I hope, will be prevail'd on to give me Leave to perform once or twice a Week (during the Vacation only) at the little Theatre in the *Hay-market*. — I ask this Permission for the Summer alone.

Could I obtain the additional Favour of having his Grace's Leave to occupy the little Playhouse at *Richmond* once a Week also (where the Nobility and Gentry are desirous of such a Diversion) which is in his Grace's Power to grant (that Playhouse being adjacent to a Royal Palace, where His Majesty and many of the Royal Family frequently are in the Summer) I could by that Means be enabled the better to keep a little Company together.

— With this Indulgence, by a close Application to Business, I might have some Chance to recruit my poor exhausted Finances,

nances, — and in some Degree repair the Losses I have sustain'd, by being a whole Winter excluded from my Business.

*This Request is, my Lords and Gentlemen, rather of more Consequence than suing for Life.* — 'Tis an *bumble* and *earnest* SOLICITATION FOR MEANS TO LIVE — I am the more embolden'd in my Hopes of being thought worthy your Consideration, — when I remember, my Father has, for many Years, enjoy'd the Honour of laughing with you in your social Hours of private Pleasures, as well as adding to your public Diversion; — and, in that latter Capacity, your Petitioner has, sometimes, had the Honour of adding to your Mirth.

The humane Consideration of making him glad, who has sometimes made you smile, — of relieving a Heart from Sorrow, that wishes still to add to your Entertainment, — will, I flatter myself, incline you generously to support this Petition of,

*My LORDS and GENTLEMEN,*

*Your most oblig'd, most obedient,*

*And most devoted humble Servant,*

THE. CIBBER.

Sometime after the following was delivered.

**T**O G——'s Gr—e I humbly sue,  
 That his Compassion may renew  
 Licence to entertain the Town,  
 During Vacation-Time alone ;  
 On you, my L—d, depends my Fate,  
 My only Hope, or Chance, to eat :  
 Your kind Compliance, from Distress  
 (As hard to feel, as to express)  
 Relieves your most devoted Servant ;  
 Whose grateful Heart, with Wishes fervent,  
 Shall for your Gr—'s Welfare pray,  
 As will become him, Night and Day.

These Petitions, &c. have been approved of by many of the Nobility, Gentry, and others. — But, — alafs ! — have not had their wished Effect.

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Here follows some Account of PRYNNE, mentioned in the first DISSERTATION, p. 111.

THIS PRYNNE, of the puritanical Tribe, was a most virulent Libeller of all who encouraged the Theatre,—sparing no Degrees of Persons, from the crowned Head to the lowest Mechanic ;—his Abuse had one good Effect : — It occasioned many excellent Plays to be printed or revived, as the best Answer to, and Reproof of, his Malevolence, and Scandal. But for this Accident many good Pieces had been lost in Oblivion, which are now an Ornament to the Stage.

His Sentence was as follows, — his Book was ordered to be burnt by the Hands of the common Hangman : — He was ordered to be put from the Bar (for an unworthy Barrister he was) and sentenced to be excluded the Society of *Lincoln's-Inn*, to be degraded by the University of *Oxford*, to stand in the Pillory at *Westminster-Hall*, and *Cheapside*, to lose an Ear at each Place, — to stand with a Paper on his Head, declaring his Offence

to be,—the Publishing an infamous Libel against their Majesties, the Peers, the Prelates, and the whole Government, to be fined 500*l.*— and to suffer perpetual Imprisonment.

However flagitious his Crime, his Punishment was certainly heavy enough: But those were Times when little Lenity was used.— What was the Consequence? A few well-meaning Patriots struggled for their natural Rights and Liberties; — Power grew jealous, — this created Heats and Animosities on both Sides. — Factious designing Men took the Advantage of those unhappy Feuds, and introduced Rebellion, Anarchy, and Confusion: — May they never return.— May strained Power never more irritate a free People, to deviate from Liberty into Licentiousness.



SOME unwarrantable Strokes of Power in the Year 1733, were aimed at the Liberty of the Stage in general, and at the Liberty of a Comedian in particular (Mr. *Harper* \*, who was a Freeholder in *Surry*, and a Housekeeper in *Westminster*) only for endeavouring, in a settled Manner, to get his Bread by his Profession, with his associated Brethren ; he was brought up by a Habeas, to the *King's-Bench*, where a Right Hon. L—d C—f J—e discharg'd him from his Confinement, only continuing him on his single Recognizance, to answer any Objections might be pretended to be brought against him : ---- But his tyrannical Opprefors, the Patentees, were advised, by their Lawyers, not to presume to carry on a Prosecution, --- which, on this Occasion, was, by learned Arguments, proved to be an unwarrantable, unjustifiable and illegal Proceeding.

\* Of this Mention is made in the first Dissertation

However,

However, two Years after, when the Actors had returned to the Theatre, in *Drury-Lane*, and consented to act again under the Patent, --- the Stage Directors of those Times, it seems, had Influence enough to procure a Bill to be brought into Par — t, for restraining the Number of Playhouses, &c.

Under whatever specious Pretences this Bill was brought into the House, it soon began to transpire, that it was an *Artifice* of the *PATENTEES*, to *engross* to *themselves* the *Use* and *Profits* of an *Art*, in which they were most ignorant. A few Persons, of a peculiar Turn indeed, were very fond of this Occasion, and seemed desirous to improve it, by laying the Ax to the very Root of the Theatre. ---- Some of these were of that kind of People, who thought the Stage took too great a Liberty, in exposing the Folly and Wickedness of mock Patriots, and mock Zealots : Whose tender Consciences could not bear the severe Strokes of Wit, which (in their Sentiments perhaps) too smartly lash'd the Craft, and Cant, of Bigots, Knaves, and Hypocrites :—With such, while Wit

Wit was judged Wickedness, — no Wonder Dulness, or Stupidity, passed for Wisdom. — As if good Humour was inconsistent with Religion, or to be cheerful, and to have the Use of our Senses were repugnant to the Dictates of Morality and Christianity. — It was plainly seen by those who would make Use of their own Eyes, that these stiff, starch'd Gentry meant this Stroke at the Theatre, but as a Prelude to further Restrictions. For, with such Men, Encouragements to Literature, in any Shape, must appear a Nuisance : 'Tis their Interest, to chain up the Senses of Mankind in general ; to shut up all Resources to Knowledge ; to prohibit all Freedom of Speech (nay of Thought if possible) that their Practices may be less liable to Discovery, and their galled Consciences secure from the Sharpness of Reproof, and the poignant Stings of Satire.

But when it was plainly perceived, this Bill was chiefly calculated to serve the Managers of two Theatres, ---- it began to be treated with less Respect, than it was at its first Appearance ; 'till, at length, even **TONY ASTON** (a strolling Player of Interludes) of drole

drole Memory, was introduced to the Bar, where he pleaded his Cause, in *Forma Pauperis*, before the Honourable Ch—m—n of the C—m—tee ; ---and, operating on the risible Muscles of the Gay, and Good-natured, he fairly laughed it out of the House. --- On Occasion of this Bill, the following CASES were *presented* severally to the House, and back'd by *Petitions* to that Purpose. —



T H E

T H E

## C A S E

O F

John Mills, James Quin, Benjamin Johnson, Theophilus Cibber, Josiah Miller, William Milward, John Harper, Benjamin Griffin, William Mills, Dennis Delane, Lacy Ryan, Thomas Chapman, Mary Heron, Katherine Horton, Elizabeth Butler, and Catherine Clive; *on Behalf of themselves, and the other principal Actors, and Performers of the two Theatres Royal of Drury-Lane, and Covent-Garden; in Relation to a Bill now depending in Parliament, for restraining the Number of Play-houses, &c.*

THE Acting of Tragedies and Comedies, being not only a Profession legal in itself, as well in this Kingdom as all others; but a Profession that has been greatly encouraged by the learned and serious Part of Mankind for many Ages past; and whenever any Performer hath acquired a Reputation

tion in that Profession, the same hath been by such only as entered into that Business in their Infancy, and applied all their Time therein with great Pains and Study.

The above named Performers, entered into this Profession in their Youth, and by great Study and Application, have arrived to such Reputation therein, as hath merited them such Stipends or Salaries, as enable them to maintain themselves and Families, in a comfortable Manner.

But should the Bill now depending before the House of Commons, for restraining the Number of Play-Houses, pass into a Law, in the Manner it now stands ; the same would be such a Restraint on the Liberty of the Performers, that they would be debarred of the Privilege every *Englishman* enjoys, and the best of them scarce capable of getting his Bread, which would tend to the great Discouragement of the Profession, and, as *it is hoped, is not the Intention of the Legislature.*

It is well known, that when there was only two Theatres, the Masters or Patentees thereof, entred into an Agreement (which they called a Cartel) greatly to the Prejudice of

of the Performers in general ; and at the Pleasure of the Masters, rendered them incapable of a Livelihood, they having spent their youthful Days in that Profession only, were unable to betake themselves to any other Employment. And the Agreement or Cartel, continued till very lately, and would probably have been still, had not a \* *Body of the principal Performers* joined together, and asserted the Rights and Liberties of *Englishmen*, by having recourse to the Law of the Land ; by which Means, they were permitted to exercise their Employment, without the Restraint and Oppression of their Patentees.

Under these Circumstances, the above-named *John Mills, Theophilus Cibber*, and eight other Performers, took a Lease of *Drury-Lane* Play-House, at the Rent of 920*l. per Ann.* which they have covenanted to pay, clear of Taxes, for fifteen Years.

And should it be thought proper to pass the Bill as it now stands, it would be in the Power of the Patentee to act in what House

\* At the *Hay-Market* Theatre, under the Direction of *Messrs. John Mills, Ben Johnson, Theo. Cibber, &c.*

or Theatre he pleased, and consequently the Lessees of *Drury-Lane* Play-House could not carry on their Busines in that Theatre, to enable them to pay the Rent thereof. Therefore it's humbly hoped, that their Property in that Respect will not only be taken care off, but their Rights and Liberties in every other Respect ; and that a Power may be vested in some Person or Persons proper for that Purpose, to relieve any Grievance or Oppression which the Performers may from time to time labour under from the Patentees, either concerning their Salaries, or otherwise ; for the Patents, as they at present stand, have from time to time been so often assigned over from one Person to another, that the Performers don't know under what Master they may fall ; and such has been the Inveteracy of some of the late Patentees to the Actors, that when Mrs. *Booth*, Executrix of her late Husband, *Barton Booth*, Esq; sold her sixth Part of the Patent to Mr. *Giffard*, she made him covenant, not to sell or assign it to Actors.

THE

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THE  
CASE

*Of the two Companies of Comedians of the Theatres Royal, of Drury-Lane, and Covent-Garden, in Relation to the Bill now depending in Parliament, for restraining the Number of Houses for Playing of Interludes, &c.*

IN this Bill is a Clause of the following Purport, “ No Person or Persons shall act, represent, or perform any Tragedy, Comedy, or other Entertainment of the Stage, except such Person or Persons in whom the Right and Property of, in, or to the several Letters Patent mentioned in the Bill is vested, and their respective Deputies and Servants, &c.”

If this Clause should pass into a Law, the said Companies do humbly conceive, that all their Rights and Liberties, which they are

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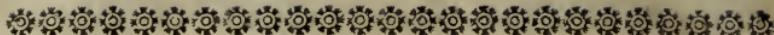
by Nature, and by the Law, as *Englishmen*, intitled to, will be thereby wholly transferred out of themselves, and vested in such Persons as shall hereafter become possessed of the aforesaid Patents ; and it will be absolutely in the Power of such Patentees to deal with the said Comedians as they shall think fit, and to take the Profit and Fruit of all the said Comedians Labour, Study and Experience, without even allowing them the Means of subsisting.

As the Law now stands, the Managements and Agreements, called Cartels, made between Patentees, do sufficiently attest the Inclinations they have had to oppress the Comedians, and take from them that Liberty, which hitherto they have been so happy as to preserve, by the Law of the Land. Therefore, if Patentees should be armed with this Clause, the Ruin of the Comedians is inevitable.

As the Busines of the Stage, which is to be established by this Bill, cannot be carried on, but by the Labour, Study and Industry of the Comedians ; they humbly hope the Legislature will not think it reasonable, they shall

shall be thereby absolutely undone, and made only Instruments in the Hands of Patentees, to be applied and dealt with just as they and their Affigns from time to time shall think fit. This will be a Case attended with the highest Circumstances of Oppression ; and therefore they do further humbly hope, that their Rights, Properties and Liberties, will be taken into Consideration, and that they may be secured to them in such Manner as shall be thought most meet.

*N. B.* Mr. *John Mills*, Mr. *Theo. Cibber*, &c. have taken a Lease of *Drury-Lane* Theatre, for Years, at 920*l. per Ann.* beside Taxes, Repairs, &c. If this Bill passes, they not being able to perform, but under the Patentees, they may (whenever the Patentees think it proper to desert the said Theatre) have near a Thousand Pounds *per Ann.* to pay, after the Means of raising it is taken away by Law.



A PAPER, called *The Prompter*, was then published, from which I have extracted some Paragraphs relative to this BILL;—which I thought might be properly inserted here.

I Heartily agree with the Majority of all Ranks, and Distinctions, that there is the most visible Necessity for reducing our Theatres under some better Regulation, than they have hitherto been govern'd by.---But then I am for applying the Axe to the Root of the Evil:---Instead of confining the royal Permission to those Hands, in which it has already been treated so scandalously, I am for depriving, in the first Step, those licentious, as well as licens'd, Incumbents, of a Power, they have appeared so unworthy of.

I will not undertake for the Truth of a Report, which, yet, seems likely enough to deserve the Credit it meets with among thinking Men;—that the Advertisement concerning

ing a Design to build, by Subscription, a New Theatre, near the Heart of the City, was a Manager's Stratagem, to alarm and incense its Magistrates, and pave the Way for Success of his own modest Purpose, to establish his Throne (and that of his Brother Monarch) in the Empire of Nonsense, by a parliamentary Exclusion of all other Pretenders.

Great Pains have been taken, by *One* \* at least of these Stage Sovereigns, to prove his Subjects no better than Rogues, under Protection of his Patent.---Now, to say nothing of the Esteem which this must have procur'd him from his loving People, he seems to have borrow'd an Absurdity from the Harlequin Side of his Character ; since a Fool, at the Head of Rogues, must have put Monarchy into manifest Danger : The Reverse of this extraordinary Position being both the surest and the commonest Situation.

I shall dedicate a Paper or two to the thorough Examination of this Subject: For, if the Players Profession is unlawful and unwar-

\* T. R. Esq; in the Case of *Harper*.

rantable, he, who lives by their Exercise of it, must be a sneaking and infamous Betrayer of the Interest and Honour of his Country.---Whence, it is plain, that if the Managers of our Play-houses continue to reap Profit from a Profession they have so openly stigmatized, they believed not a Word of the Arguments they made use of ; and their Sincerity shou'd be reverenced accordingly.

But I own myself very far from considering the oft-quoted Statute of *Elizabeth* in the Sense which is commonly given it :---I believe, on the contrary, it is easy to prove,---first, that the Word Interludes, in that Act, bears no Relation at all either to Tragedy or Comedy, in a Theatre ;---and, secondly, that the Actors cou'd never be meant, or included, within the Compass of that extraordinary Statute.

To infer from a reasonable and necessary Discountenance of Vagabonds assuming the Player, that all Players, regularly such, ought also to be considered as Vagabonds, is a groundless and irrational *Contradiction to common Sense, and a Satire on the Wisdom of Parliaments.*—Neither is the Compliment, which

which is paid by these deep-discriminating Patentees of the Theatres, to the Royal Power, under which they assert their Monopoly, the least Opening they have given us, to judge of their Understanding, and their Gratitude : --- No Matter (say they) tho' the Players, by the Sweat of whose Brow we live comfortably, are Vagabonds and Rogues, by the Statute, the King can protect 'em, by calling them his Servants. — And it is no such uncommon Thing, for a King to have Rogues in his Service. --- But they ought to have been convinced by the Royal Resentment, that it is no Prerogative of a Crown to protect the Base or the Guilty ; and that if Men are usefully and honestly employ'd, it is Infamy to suppose, that they should stand in need of a Shelter. — If illegally and corruptly, it is an Affront to the Majesty of Kings, to provide them a Power for supporting or licensing them.

Upon the whole : All the Evil to be found in dramatic Institutions, arises from one Root : And that is, the Avarice and Ignorance of Men who take upon them their

Management. —— Were the Government of the Stage in judicious and capable Hands, no Actor would dare to be lazy, because sure to be degraded in Consequence : Neither would he dare to be arrogant, because he would be judged of, and treated impartially. He would be taught, that to study his Part, required more than to remember the Words of it. — The Poets too would lose Time, if ever they writ loofely, because sure to have their Pieces rejected, for that Reason. — So that the Town would be formed, by a kind of insensible Compulsion, into a just, and a moral Taste ; because no Plays would be seen, but such as were formed upon those Principles.

I gave some Reasons in my last, why an Attempt of our Play-house Patentees, to secure to themselves, their Heirs, and Affigns, a Monopoly of dramatic Wit, in this Kingdom, was an arrogant, and ill-grounded Proof, that they had but little of the Commodity to spare, notwithstanding their Design to engross it. —

I come now to another Division of my Purpose ; which is, to consider, why the Bill,

Bill, as solicited by those interested *Managers*, was neither necessary, nor expedient; and with what Variation it might possibly have been formed, in such Manner, as to have been acknowledged both the one and the other.

Had not the Wisdom of an illustrious Body distinguished, as it justly did, between regulating Players, and immuring them; between the Improvement of a Theatre, and the Enrichments of it's Managers; the ever to be lamented Success of two or three private Men's Presumption, would have torn away from the public Hope, all Means, Expectation, or Likelihood, of ever seeing the Stage in a Condition becoming the Greatness of a People, who would be thought either lettered or politic.

That inattentive and indolent Survey, with which most Readers run over these Papers of the Week, makes it necessary to repeat Confessions we would wish remembered. — Let me therefore, here again, declare, that I allow the Stage to be corrupt, and that it languishes for Reformation. — But I cannot, without stumbling, get over such

such a Rub, in the Way of Common Sense, as that appropriating the Power of corrupting it farther, to those who have been so active in corrupting it already, is the Means of protecting us, against the Growth of its Corruption!

It is not from the Number, but the Nature of Things, we are to expect their Influence, in Good, or Evil. — Let the Root of a Tree be found, and the Soil not improper, and it will never the sooner wither, for the Wideness of it's Branches.

Even were we, for Argument's Sake, to allow that the Stage is dangerous in itself, I don't know, but an Act for it's Restraint might tend rather to make it desirable, than weaken it's Influence. — When some deep, and turbulent River, has obstructed the March of an Army, we read of Generals who, by multiplying it's Channels, have reduc'd it to the requisite Shallowness. — Why shou'd we not expect a like Effect, from a Cause of the same Nature, supposing it applied to the Play-houses? — Were their Numbers to be encreased, the Delight they afford would, in Consequence, be less tempting: The Novelty taken away, would insensibly diminish the

the Desire. — And when those honest Citizens, of whose Welfare their Magistrates are so prudently careful, should find Play-houses as familiar to them as their Wives, they would grow less fond of them, for the same Reason. So that in this Light, their Restraint were bad Policy.

It has been urged with more Noise than Argument, that without some seasonable Restraint, we might come to have a Play-house set up in every Street. — The very same Complaint was made, by some gloomy Enthusiasts, in the Reign of King *Charles* the First. — There were then eight Play-houses within the Bills of Mortality, and the Town scarce, no, not a twentieth Part, half so large or so populous as at present. — These were so many Looking-Glasses, in which those Promoters of Faction and Anarchy saw themselves, and were mortified. — At length, together with Law, Religion, and Monarchy, down went the Theatres ! — But what arose in their Place, gave, I think, no great Inducement to make us fond of renewing the Example.

A Play-house in every Street, is a Sentence, that (like Patentees of the Theatre) carries

carries an empty, tho' formidable Sound? — The Words have Menace, and Vanity; but their Meaning is light, and ridiculous. — Let us suppose a Foundation for the extravagant *Idea*: — What ill Consequence could follow? — Are there not Taverns in every Street? Places whose Support depends really on that Luxury, which is but awkwardly, and affectedly, made a Ground-work for the Encrease of our Theatres? — Let us imagine the Number of these Taverns reduced to a fourth, by Effect of some Act of Reformation, which had the Honour to be solicited, by Men of such known Self-denial and Gravity, as the Managers of our Farces and Opera's; — should we then see Drunkenness diminish, in Proportion to so pious a Reduction? — Not at all. — The Cafe, as it regards the Public, would be found just the same: The Taverns remaining, being a fourth of their former Number, would have four Times their former Custom: And the only Improvement visible would be, that a Few would grow extravagantly rich, upon the Follies of the Public, instead of a great many moderately so. “*The Patentees*  
“ *might*

“ might not be able to support the Grandeur of  
 “ Nobility, but they might still live quite as well  
 “ as they deserve, and much better than any of  
 “ their Family did before 'em.”

It would be the same Thing exactly, in the Case of the Play-houses. ---- Any Restraint of their Number, without proportionable Enlargement to their Manager's Capacity (an Extent of Grace, for which I have heard of no Precedent, in Parliament) would be of Benefit only to the Licentiates of Dullness. ---- *Harlequin's Dogs* might indeed be transformed into Race-Horses ; and he might call up new Domes to sustain himself, in Place of deposed *Mercury* ; insulting Wit, with the Triumphs of Folly : But far would all this be from refining, or correcting the Stage ! ---- Emulation, on the contrary, would be extinguished, both in Actors and Managers ; and theatric Entertainment must degenerate in Proportion.

After having thus plainly declared for what Reasons I am pleased with that Damp, which has been thrown by the Legislature, upon the Warmth of the Managers Expectation and Avarice ; I shall offer my Thoughts in

in a Hint, how a virtual Restraint may be capable of answering every good Purpose, without any of that unnecessary Severity, which would be supposed to accompany an actual one.

Instead of putting down all Play-houses, but such as are stamped with the Mark of Authority, and carry their Lead, at the Head of the Piece, like Broad-Cloth, in the Shops of our Woollen-Drapers, it would be sufficient, (or I am greatly out in my Judgment) — to prohibit the Acting any Farce, Harlequinery, Buffoonery, or other, dancing, singing, dumb, or deserving to be dumb, Entertainment, or any Thing, beyond, plain Tragedy, or Comedy — except only in the Royal, and Licens'd Theatres.—

Such an Act must be approved, even by the Patentees, because it would leave to those *Sampsons* of the Stage, the lovely *Dalilahs* they are so fond of; and bestow nothing upon their Rivals, but what they have made it a Choice, to part with already.

It must be approved by the Actors, because being wholly useless, as the Theatres are managed at present, they would be restored

restored to a Chance in the new ones, of recovering their Distinction and Encouragement.

It must be approved by the Town, because Audiences would be left to the Enjoyment of their natural Liberty. — The Gay, and the Fashionable, might meet one another at the Sign of the License ; while the Wise and the Serious, would content themselves with plain Reason, nor regard good Sense the less, because my Lord has no Taste for it.

One of these following Consequences must, inevitably, attend such a general Indulgence to poor Sense, with Restraint from those fine Things only, which are fit for Rank and Distinction : — Either the New Theatres, Encouragement failing, must drop, of themselves, in which Case the Guilt of their Murder could not be charged upon their Rivals — or their Success, should they meet with it, must be the Reward of their Merit, in acting, and of their Skill in the Choice of their Pieces : In which last Case, they would correct, and reform their Competitors of the Patents ; till, by out-acting

ing and out-managing them, they might (I speak with due Salvo to the Possibility of the Supposition !) shame those licens'd Stage-Triflers out of Corruption and Ignorance, and compel 'em, in Consequence, either to give up their affected Distinction ; or maintain it, by a well-grounded Superiority, in their Judgment and Influence.



THE following *Address* to a *considerable Person* (a great Favourer of the Bill) was wrote at that Time ; but (the Bill being dropped) it was laid by : --- Yet, as not foreign to the present Purpose, we hope it may be acceptable to the Reader.

To the *H—ble Sir J— B—*.

THE declined Stage was before in so languishing a Condition, and Science in general reduced to so low an Ebb, that a less skilful Hand than yours, would have sufficed to depress it ; but in all Nations it has had its Rise and Fall : Our *Britain* has, for a Century past, been the Patroness of Arts, but now no more.—Unhappy are the Men who, for the best Part of their Lives, have assiduously strove to cultivate a Science, for which they shall be adjudged Vagabonds.—A pleasing Prospect for a Man, who has toiled twenty, thirty, or forty Years ; who, tho' guilty of no Crime or Indecency, if, by the Caprice of a Master or Patentee, he should be discharged, shall be called a Rogue by Act of Parliament, because he's a Player. Hard State ! So that, at best, he was but a licensed Rogue ; yet this is mere Contradiction :

diction : — If the being a Comedian makes a Man a Rogue and Vagabond out of the Theatre, why will an Act of Parliament licence him in one? Or do they put up with a small Number of Rogues, if confin'd to two Theatres only ?

The Theatre, from it's first Institution, has always had the Honour of being supported by Men of the best Sense and Taste ; and has ever been esteem'd the best School for moral Virtue, and the only Academy for instructing People in their Mother Tongue ; and, I dare venture to say, whatever Improvements have been made in our Language, are chiefly owing to that.

From the earliest Days Mankind has been lur'd to Virtue by instructive Fables ; and I believe you'll find the Book of *Job* to be one of the dramatic Kind. The holy Writ makes frequent Inferences to the old *Grecian* Poets ; and even our blessed Saviour, who purg'd the Temple of *Jerusalem* of the Money-Brokers, &c. never once spoke against the Theatres ; for it may be proved both by History and Chronology, that there were Plays, and other public Diversions, as well at *Jerusalem*, as other Parts of *Judea* : Had he not known

known it to be conducive to Virtue, he, who warn'd 'em of all Vice, would sure have persuaded 'em against that; so far from it, he himself has chose to teach that, and succeeding Ages, by Parables; on which same Design the Stage Entertainments are founded: That is, instructive Fables, so wrought up, as to convey, at the same Time, Pleasure and Profit.

Nay, whoever considers the Views of the Pulpit and Stage, must necessarily confess they were designed mutually to assist each other: The Theatre was to moralize Men, either smilingly to lure 'em into Virtue, or by shewing 'em the tragical Effects of Vice, with all the Flowers of Rhetoric and Poetry, to point out the dangerous Paths, and guide 'em to the right: The Pulpit was, by grave Precepts, to fix and improve those Morals that the Stage inspir'd; the Theatre was to purge away the gross Humours, and cleanse the filthy Mass, and the Pulpit a reviving Cordial to restore it to its primitive Vigour.

*Randolph*, an old *English* Poet, says —

— “They abuse our Scene, and say

“ We live by Vice: Indeed 'tis true,

“ As the Physicians by Diseases do,  
 “ Only to *cure them.*”

And again,

—“ Boldly I dare say,  
 “ There have been more by us, in some one  
 “ Play,  
 “ Laugh'd into Wit and Virtue, than hath  
 “ been,  
 “ By twenty tedious Lectures, drawn from  
 “ Sin.”

But when I endeavour to prove that the Stage and Pulpit are alike calculated to reform the Vicious, I know there are People in *England*, who will wrest my Meaning to Blasphemy; who, by pretending tender Consciences, are allowed to dissent from the established Religion of their Country, and, not content with that, wou'd, if they cou'd, abolish it: Who, like the outcast Fiend, still restless and unsatisfied, repine at the Good of their Neighbours, and damn all who differ from their Tenets who; think no Man can be virtuous, unless stupidly dull; and that Wit and Christianity are inconsistent; despising Knowledge, because they use it not; all their Wisdom consisting in a starch'd Gravity,

vitry, close Hypocrisy, and mimic Piety.—What wou'd they have ?---Where would their mad-brain'd Zeal hurry them ? Have they not already dethroned one King, martyr'd their anointed Lord, and piously destroyed their Brethren and Kindred, because they cou'd not think the same Way as they ? What ! And are they again pursuing the old Scheme ? I think 'tis plain to all Persons in their Senses : Are they not, even now, endeavouring for a Repeal of the *Test Act*, by which Means they have Hopes of sharing in Power, and the Administration of Affairs ; and by that Means be better enabled to perpetrate and renew their former horrid Villainies ? Would they make Time, as it comes round, carry the same fatal Influence, and (which Heaven avert) the Forty-eight of this Century tally with the Forty-eight of the last ! And what we are to expect, we must judge by their Behaviour heretofore ---Our Monarch is our Guardian, and we, as well as his other Subjects, depend on his Clemency for Life, that is, the Enjoyment of Life (Liberty). Heaven gave us Life ; our King gives us Liberty, without which, Life

is but a vast Nothing, or a galling Load ; and every *Englishman* justly abhors both papal and fanatic Rulers.

Their striking at the Stage is but a Prelude,---they wou'd, if they cou'd, entirely destroy all Learning, nay, chain up your very Senses : For whilst Mens Eyes are open they will see, and, whilst they see, discover their Practices ; Satire or Reproof stings their gall'd Consciences to the Quick.

The Bill now depending in Parliament, may, by some, perhaps, be esteem'd a public Good ; that is, by all who are mean-spirited enough to rejoice at the Slavery of their Fellow-Subjects. The Occasion of its bringing in was, the Report of a Playhouse being to be built in *St. Martin's le Grand*, which Report was previously raised (as I am well informed), for that Purpose ; there never being any such Thing design'd, or on Foot (so that if it is a private Good, the first Source of it was some low private Pique). There was too, about the same Time, a Letter in one of the daily Papers, wherein several Reasons were aim'd at, endeavouring to prove the ill Consequence thereof ; and some invidious

Hints

Hints at *Goodman's-Fields* Theatre, declare, that they all come from the same public-spirited Hand.—

It has been proved by Counsel, learned in the Law, in *Harper's* Case, that the Business of acting Plays is lawful ; for that if it were illegal, the King could not grant a Patent. His Majesty cannot authorise a Man to steal ; and a Patent, granted as at *Drury-Lane*, is only to constitute such Persons his Majesty's Servants, but cannot make the Thing elsewhere illegal. No Power can make *Malum in se*, *Bonum in se*, tho' fanatic Hypocrisy may make it seem so. You say they continue to act in Defiance of his Majesty and the Acts of Parliament ; no, they act by the inherent Right every *Englishman* was always deem'd to have, till now, of following any visible Means of Livelihood he pleases.—I believe there are several Men in *London* that make considerable Figures, whose Business or Arts are not illegal, tho' there is no direct Law for them. Foreigners that come over to *England* are free to chuse what Employment they will, and shall a Native

be denied what is granted to Interlopers ? If Patents can protect People from the Laws, here they are necessary. A Scum of exil'd *Frenchmen* or *Italians* have Need of a Patent to play by ; but the Design of this Bill is not to oppress them.—There is a Loophole for the first to get out of, and the latter have a stronger Power than a Patent, they are made a Body-incorporate, by Charter, under the Title of the Royal Academy of Music. A Charter, every body knows, is the strongest Grant that can be. They are, in short, deem'd as considerable Persons as the whole *City of London*, or any other ; for *they* subsist but by Charter ; whilst his Majesty's own *English* Servants have a Patent for twenty-one Years. For shame blot it from your Records, lest Posterity laugh at the Folly of their Sires.

The second Charge is Lewdness, and the enticing 'Prentices from their Masters Business ; here you mistake the Effect for the Cause : 'Tis not the Playhouse makes them lewd, but (if it is so) they the Playhouse ; and unless you can deprive People of their Appetites, you do nothing : A Man that is viciously

viciously inclined will be so at a Church, as well as a Playhouse. As to 'Prentices, and Persons of the like Class, 'tis evident they will spend their leisure Evenings somewhere abroad ; if they go to a Play, it will cost 'em but one Shilling for the whole ; if they go to a Tavern, or even an Alehouse, it must needs cost them more, besides the Danger of coming Home drunk, and setting Fire to their Masters Houses :---And further,---the Spirit of Gaming now runs so through the Kingdom, that they are more liable to be insnared by that than any Vice, which may be attended with the worst Consequence ; and, I think, this, and another most detestable Sin, that is daily growing up amongst us, calls louder for the Regulation of the Legislature, than the Playhouses. Are not our Youth so debauch'd with Effeminacy and *Italian* Airs, that we daily see Male Children of the best Families, dwindle almost into Women ? And, is the antient *British* Fire, Spirit, and Bravery, to be supported by such as these ? On the other Hand, don't our Ladies look and behave more like Males than the Gentlemen ? Is it not customary, for Ladies of

Fashion

Fashion especially, and Citizens Wives too, when the Tea-Equipage is dispatch'd, to sit either to Cards or Hazard, and play away the Portion of a favourite Child at a single Setting? Does the Playhouse encourage Gaming and Effeminacy? On the Reverse, does it not expose them both in a particular Manner?

Besides, the Theatre in *Goodman's Fields* is chiefly supported by Captains of Ships, and seafaring Men, who thereby carry abroad a Taste of Politeness and Generosity, and give the World a better Idea of *English* Manners; they are roused from their Barbarity, and taught to think like human Creatures; a considerable Sum of their Money is left here to circulate, which might otherwise, perhaps, be carried abroad.

Or consider the better Class of People that frequent it,—which are Merchants, Tradesmen, their Wives, or Daughters: Can it any Way interfere with their Business, it never beginning till the Hour that all Business is over, and has constantly done by Ten at farthest, which is no unseasonable Hour; but

I think

I think an Objection is raised, that it is of bad Effect to young Tradesmen, by making them neglect their Business, and spending their Money, which is often the Cause of their becoming Bankrupts. As to their Business, I think 'tis answered before; and as to the Expences, if a Man goes to the Play every Time one is acted (which no-body does) it may stand him in but eight or nine Pounds *per Annum*; so that 'tis evident the Play-house cannot contribute to any Man's breaking: — No, — 'tis the Affectation of the younger Tradesmen to appear like Gentlemen, to keep their Brace of Geldings and Mistresses, a Foot-boy, and a Country-house; to have a sumptuous Table; 'tis this that makes so many Bankrupts: All which Vices the Theatre condemns and ridicules.

I think 'tis needless to mention the Number of Tradesmen and Families that subsist entirely by that House, and must consequently perish, if denied the Freedom of Subjects of *England*, to live by their Business.

Limners, Etchers, and Engravers, are allowed a Property in their Works; the Man  
that

that preserves our Shadows, is caressed and rewarded ; a Hair Cutter shall get an Estate, and People grow rich by making a Lixivium to clean our Hands and Faces : But a Set of People, that endeavour to lure us to Virtue, to mend our Manners, and inform us with a living Soul, we treat like Slaves, or Things beneath our Cognizance. A Fiddler shall be enrolled in a Company, tho' all the Benefit he is to Mankind, is only to amuse a drunken Herd of a Lord Mayor's Day, or set the Girls a jigging to some lamentable Tune ; whilst a Player, the just Mirror of the Age he lives in, — that holds ye up a Glass, and shews ye your Follies, displays your Vice, and tells ye where to amend, — is poorly condemned to be esteemed a Vagabond.

Barbarous Thought ! Injustice to the last Degree ! — a Freeman of *London*, a Native of *England*, our Fellow-Subject, and our Brother in a social Tye, shall be denied the Liberty that is allowed *French* Dancers, and Harlequins, — to effeminate Enunchs, and Sod——l *Italians* ; yet such shall be encouraged, and *Englishmen* despised !

That

That the Stage is the chief Encourager of the Muses, is plain, and in some late Years, where the Stage met with Success, it produced several fine Genius's within itself. All the Necessaries of Life the great *Dryden* had, was from thence ; this, I believe, is well known to all Men. — But now 'tis useless all, — the Poets and the Players Labours ; — vainly has a *Shakespear*, *Dryden*, *Southern*, *Otway*, *Rowe*, impearled each Eye, warmed the phlegmatic Soul to glorious Deeds, and melted each obdurate Heart to Pity : — Vainly have *Johnson*, *Fletcher*, and manly *Wycherly*, lashed our Follies ; — *England*, ungrateful to the last Degree, as if she had vowed to abrogate all Wit, and Sense, — condemned her Poets whilst alive to starve, and dooms the Orators, that keep alive their Works, Vagrants. Have we not even now one living, who, belonging to the Stage, hath produced several moral and entertaining Comedies ? Of which the *Careless Husband*, and the *Provoked Husband*, will be lasting Monuments, spite of the Ingratitude of his Countrymen ? Is not Vice and Folly, there

there expos'd in the most lively Manner, and Virtue cherished ? If it can be proved that any one Person ever learned Virtue at an Opera, or imbibed one good Thought at the most favourite Air of *Farinello*, I'll give up the Stage to the Mercy of it's worst Enemies without repining.

I may have already been too prolix, therefore will only beg leave to make one Remark more concerning the Stage of *Great Britain* ; which is, that in *every Reign*, in which *Liberty* and *Honour* flourished, the *Stage* was likewise *cherished* ; — which is no Indication, that it depraves Men's Manners. As for Instance, the first Traces of it were in *Henry the VIIIth's Time* ; it sunk with the *PROTESTANT RELIGION*, beneath *Queen Mary's Persecution* : In *Queen Elizabeth's Time* it flourished again, — and *Shakespear* was a Player, beloved by the Queen. During the Civil War, it was laid aside, and those very Fanatics, that murdered their King, abolished the Play-house ; but may Heaven subvert their present Design, which carries a manifest Tendency to the same End : Disappointed in their Repeal, they fain would

try

try their Force in this ; which Point, if carried, will induce them next to strike at the Liberty of the Press ; and where then they may drive is impossible to imagine.

This Epistle, by some gloomy Malevolents, will be looked on as impertinent ; but Justice is open to the lowest ; Losers have leave to speak.— And what must become of 500 Families, who will be destroyed by this Act, yet have a Right to live as well as you, or any of their Fellow-Subjects ? — Will they not have Reason to wish they had been born any Thing but *Britons* ? — There are many who have had the best Education, who are unable to endure the Fatigues of Labour, and can apply to nothing else ; and I believe, there is no Instance of a Parliament of *England*, depriving the Subject of their Right. *The Intent of Law is to guard, not to break thro' their Privileges* : But herein the Liberty of many,—nay, their all is struck at ; and he that tamely lies down, and suffers himself to be trod on, deserves such Usage. And if their Privileges are to be thus invaded, and their Rights destroyed, let's hope you next will chain 'em to Oars, — there to drag out a few

few tiresome Moments, and, with their dying Breath, curse their Undoers.

You often affect, Sir, — to be a zealous Pleader for our Liberties ; — give me Leave therefore to ask you, — “ Whether it is *consistent* with *Common Sense* and *Justice*, to make a *PENAL LAW* *against* a *Profession*, that *no Law* has *pronounced CRIMINAL* ? ”

As all Approaches towards *absolute Power*, and *arbitrary Administration*, ought to be strenuously opposed, — should there not be a *more* than *ordinary Care* taken, that such *superior Powers* should *never* come into the Hands of so *inferior* a *Magistrate*, as a *Justice of the Peace* ; who may not always be wise enough, — too often, not honest enough, — and rarely, very rarely, independent enough, — to be entrusted with the extraordinary Powers of original and final *Jurisdiction* ? — — When by such Laws, the *English Justice* is invested with the Power of a *Turkish Bashaw*, the *Briton* will have but little Reason to boast his *Superiority of Freedom* over the *Musselman*. — — Will such Powers be *consistent* with our *CONSTITUTION* ? — How *deliberately* therefore ought

*every*

every Member to weigh every Article of any Bill that is proposed, lest he should unwarily give his Consent to a *Law*, that may in any Sort conduce towards the *Weakening* our *Constitution*, and render the *Liberties* of a People *precarious*. Will not every wise Head, and honest Heart, be very tender — of adding to the Power of J——s, already too enormous? — Will they not dread dispensing with that *Barrier* of our *Liberties*, the *HABEAS CORPUS ACT*? Or will they deprive any Subject of that Jewel, which *MAGNA-CHARTA* left us, a *Jury*? Or will they deny any of the People the Privilege of *BAIL*?

*I am,*

S I R, &c.

The Bill to which this Address relates, was (as before intimated) laid aside. In what an artful Manner another was introduced, — how precipitately brought in, and as hastily hurried on, at what Season of the Year, &c.

F the

the following elegant Speech will shew, I think myself happy, in having preserved a Copy of it. — Whatever are the Defects of these Dissertations, &c. — this admirable Oration will, I may venture to affirm, compensate for 'em all. Its Excellency needs no Comment ; its Delivery cannot be described ; — never did Orator command more deep Attention : — His charmed Auditors stood motionless, and silent as calm Night ;

They were all Ear. —

The raptured Soul absorb'd in deep Attention,

Caus'd every other Sense to drop its Function,

As Hearing were it's only Faculty.



The *E—l of Ch—'s SPEECH*, against the *Bill*, entitled, — An *Act* made to *explain* and *amend* so much of an *Act* made in the twelfth Year of the Reign of *QUEEN ANNE*, intitled, an *Act* for reducing the *Laws* relating to *Rogues, &c.* as relates to *common Players of Interludes*.

My L—ds,

THE *Bill* now before you, I apprehend to be of a very *extraordinary*, a very dangerous *Nature*. — It seems designed not only as a *Restraint* to the *Licentiousness* of the *Stage*, but it will prove a most arbitrary *Restraint* on the *Liberty* of the *Stage*; and I fear, it looks yet farther; I fear, it tends towards a *Restraint* on the *LIBERTY* of the *PRESS*, which will be a long Stride towards the *Destruction* of *LIBERTY ITSELF*. — It is not only a *Bill*, my L—ds, of a very *extraordinary* *Nature*, but has been brought in at a very *extraordinary* *Season*, and pushed with most *extraordinary*

Dispatch.--When I considered how near it was to the *End of the Session*, and how *long this Session* had been *protracted* beyond the usual Time of the Year ; when I considered, that *this Bill* passed through the other House with so much *Precipitancy*, as even to get the Start of a Bill, which deserved all the Respect, and all the Dispatch the Forms of either House of Parliament could admit of ; it set me upon enquiring what could be the *Reason* of introducing this Bill at so *unseasonable* a *Time*, and *pressing* it *forward* in a *Manner* so very *singular* and *uncommon*. — I have made all possible Inquiry, and as yet, I must confess, *I am at a Loss to find out the great Occasion*. I have, 'tis true, learned from common Report without Doors, that a most seditious, a most heinous Farce \* had been offered to one of the Theatres ; a Farce for which the Authors ought to be punished in a most exemplary Manner : But what was the Consequence ? The Master of that Theatre behaved as he was in Duty bound, and as common Prudence directed : He not only refused to bring it upon the Stage, but carried it to a certain Honourable Gentleman in the

\* The Golden Rump, —— it was rejected, &c.

the Administration, as the surest Method of having it suppressed. — Could this be the Occasion of introducing such an extraordinary Bill, at such an extraordinary Season, and pushing it in so extraordinary a Manner? *Surely no:* — The *dutiful Behaviour* of the *Players*, the *prudent Caution* they shewed upon that Occasion, can *never be a Reason* for *subjecting* them to such an *arbitrary Restraint*: It is an Argument in their Favour, and a material one, in my Opinion, against the Bill. — Nay farther, if we consider all Circumstances, it is to me a full Proof, that *the Laws now in being are sufficient for punishing those Players, who shall venture to bring any seditious Libel upon the Stage*, and consequently sufficient for deterring all Players from acting any Thing, that may have the least Tendency towards giving a reasonable Offence. — I do not, my L—ds, pretend to be a Lawyer; I do not pretend to know perfectly the Power and Extent of our Laws; but I have conversed with those that do, and by them I have been told, that *our Laws are sufficient for punishing any Person, that shall dare to represent upon the Stage, what may*

appear, either by the *Words* or *Representation*, to be *blasphemous*, *sedition*, or *immoral*. — I must own indeed, I have observed of late, a remarkable *Licentiousness* in the Stage. — There have but very lately been two Plays acted, which, one would have thought, should have given the greatest Offence, and yet both were suffered to be often represented without Disturbance, without Censure \*. — In one, THE AUTHOR thought fit to represent the three great Professions, *Religion*, *Physic*, and the *Law*, as inconsistent with common Sense : In the other, a most tragical Story was brought upon the Stage, a Catastrophe too recent, too melancholy, and of too solemn a Nature, to be heard of any where but from the Pulpit. — How these Pieces came to pass unpunished, I do not know : If I am rightly informed, it was not for

\* The late *H. F*—*g*, Esq; whose *Licentiousness*, as an Author, chiefly contributed towards drawing on the Resentment of a Minister ; and thereby occasioned the heavy Hand of Power to fall on the Stage in general : — Whereby the Innocent suffered with the Guilty. This same Gentleman, as a *M*—*g*—*te*, with specious and fallacious Arguments (stole from *Mandeville* and others) has occasioned some Laws to be made, which give such unlimited Power to *J*—*es* of the *P*—, as may, by Degrees, prove the entire *Destruction* of our once boasted *LIBERTY* ; and lay the Foundation of the most tyrannic and arbitrary Power.

for want of *Law*, but for want of *Prosecution*, without which no *Law* can be made effectual. But if there was any Neglect in this Case, I am not convinced it was not with a Design to prepare the Minds of the People, and to make them think a new *Law* necessary.

Our Stage *ought* certainly, my L—ds, to be *kept* within *due Bounds*; but *for this, our Laws*, as they stand *at present*, are *sufficient*: If our Stage-Players at any Time exceed those Bounds, they *ought* to be prosecuted, they may be punished: We have Precedents, we have Examples of Persons having been punished for Things less criminal than either of the two Pieces I have just mentioned. — A *new Law* must therefore be unnecessary, and in the present Case it cannot be unnecessary without being **DANGEROUS**: Every *unnecessary Restraint* on *Licentiousness*, is a *Fetter* upon the *Legs*, is a *SHACKLE* upon the *HANDS* of *LIBERTY*. — One of the greatest Blessings we enjoy, *one of the greatest Blessings* a People, my L—ds, *can enjoy*, is *LIBERTY*; — but every Good in this Life has its Allay of Evil: — *Licentiousness* is the *Allay of Liberty*: It is an Ebullition, an

Excrecence, —— it is a *Speck* upon the *Eye* of the *political Body*, which I can never *touch*, but with a *gentle*, with a *trembling* Hand, lest I *destroy* the Body, lest I *injure* the *Eye* upon which it is apt to appear. —— If the Stage becomes at any Time licentious, if a Play appears to be a Libel upon the Government, or upon any particular Man, the King's Courts are open, the Law is sufficient for punishing the Offender ; and in this Case, the Person injured has a singular Advantage ; he can be under no Difficulty to prove who is the Publisher ; the Players themselves are the Publishers, and there can be no Want of Evidence to convict them.

But, my Lords, suppose it true, that the Laws now in being are not sufficient for putting a Check to, or preventing the Licentiousness of the Stage ; suppose it absolutely necessary some new Law should be made for that Purpose ; yet it must be granted that *such a Law* ought to be *maturely considered*, and every *Clause*, every *Sentence*, nay, every *Word* of it well *weighed* and *examined*, lest, under some of those Methods, *presumed* or pretended to be necessary for *restraining Licentiousness*, a

Power

Power should lie concealed, which might afterwards be made Use of, for giving *a dangerous Wound to Liberty.* --- Such a Law ought not to be introduced at the Close of a Session; nor ought we, in the Passing such a Law, to depart from any of the Forms prescribed by our Ancestors for preventing Deceit and Surprise.

There is such a Connection between Licentiousness and Liberty, that it is not easy to correct the one, without dangerously wounding the other: It is extremely hard to distinguish the true Limit between them: Like a changeable Silk, we can easily see there are two different Colours, but we cannot easily discover where the one ends, or where the other begins. ---- There can be no great and immediate Danger from the Licentiousness of the Stage. I hope it will not be pretended that our Government may, before next Winter, be overturned by such Licentiousness, even tho' our Stage were at present under no Sort of legal Controul. ---- Why then may we not delay till next Session passing any Law against the Licentiousness of the Stage? Neither our Government can be

be altered, nor our Constitution overturned by such a Delay ; but by *passing* a Law *rashly* and *unadvisedly*, our *Constitution* may at once be *destroyed*, and our *Government* rendered *arbitrary*. ---- Can we then put a small, a short-lived Inconvenience, in the Balance with perpetual Slavery ? Can it be supposed that a P----t of *G----t B----n* will so much as risk the latter, for the Sake of avoiding the former ?

Surely, my L---ds, this is not to be expected, were the Licentiousness of the Stage much greater than it is ; were the Insufficiency of our Laws more obvious than can be pretended ; but when we complain of the Licentiousness of the Stage, and the Insufficiency of our Laws, I fear we have more Reason to complain of bad Measures in our Polity, and a general Decay of Virtue and Morality among the People. ---- In public as well as private Life, the only Way to prevent being ridiculed or censured, is to avoid all ridiculous or wicked Measures, and to pursue such only as are virtuous or worthy. ---- The People never endeavour to ridicule those they love and esteem, nor will they suffer

suffer them to be ridiculed: If any one attempts it, the Ridicule returns upon the Author; he makes himself only the Object of public Hatred and Contempt. ---- The Actions or Behaviour of a private Man may pass unobserved, and consequently unapplauded, uncensured; but the Actions of those in high Stations, can neither pass without Notice, nor without Censure or Applause; and therefore, an Administration without Esteem, without Authority among the People, let their Power be ever so great, let their Power be ever so arbitrary, they will be ridiculed: ---- The severest Edicts, the most terrible Punishments, cannot entirely prevent it. ---- If any Man therefore thinks he has been ridiculed, if any Man thinks he has been censured upon any of our public Theatres, let him examine his Actions, he will find the Cause; let him alter his Conduct, he will find a Remedy. ---- As no Man is perfect, as no Man is infallible, the greatest may err, the most circumspect may be guilty of some Piece of ridiculous Behaviour. ---- It is not Licentiousness, it is an useful Liberty, always indulged the Stage in a free Country, that some great Men

Men may there meet with a just Reproof, which none of their Friends will be free enough, or rather faithful enough, to give them. ---- Of this we have a famous Instance in the *Roman History*. ---- The great *Pompey*, after the many Victories he had obtained, and the great Conquests he had made, had certainly a good Title to the Esteem of the People of *Rome*; yet that great Man, by some Error in his Conduct, became an Object of general Dislike; and therefore, in the Representation of an old Play, when *Diphilus* the Actor, came to repeat these Words, *Nostra miseria tu es Magnus*, the Audience immediately applied them to *Pompey*, who at that Time was as well known by the Name *Magnus*, as by the Name *Pompey*, and were so highly pleased with the Satire, that, as *Cicero* says, they made the Actor, by their Clamour, repeat the Words a hundred Times over. ---- An Account of this was immediately sent to *Pompey*, who, instead of resenting it as an Injury, was so wise as to take it for a just Reproof. ---- He examined his Conduct, he altered his Measures, he regained by Degrees the Esteem of the

the People, and then he neither fear'd the Wit, nor felt the Satire of the Stage.---This is an Example which ought to be followed by great Men in all Countries.---Such Accidents will often happen in every free Country, and many such would probably have afterwards happen'd at *Rome*, if they had continued to enjoy their Liberty. But this Sort of Liberty in the Stage came soon after, I suppose, to be called Licentiousness ; for we are told that *Augustus*, after having established his Empire, restored Order in *Rome* by restraining Licentiousness.—God forbid we should, in this Country, have Order restored, or Licentiousness restrained, at so dear a Rate as the People of *Rome* paid for it to *Augustus* !

In the Case I have mentioned, my L—ds, it was not the Poet that wrote, for it was an old Play, nor the Players that acted, for they only repeated the Words of the Play, it was the People who pointed the Satire ; and the Case will always be the same : When a Man has the Misfortune to incur the Hatred and Contempt of a People, when public Measures are despised, the Audience will

will apply what never was, what cou'd not be design'd as a Satire on the present Times.—Nay, even tho' the People should not apply, those who are conscious of Guilt, those who are conscious of the Weakness or Wick-edness of their own Conduct, will take to themselves what the Author never design'd.—A public Thief is apt to take the Satire, as he is apt to take the Money, which was never design'd for him.—We have an In-stance of this in the Case of a Comedian of the last Age, a Comedian who was not only a good Poet, but an honest Man, and a quiet and good Subject. The famous *Moliere*, when he wrote his *Tartuffe*, which is cer-tainly an excellent and a good moral Comedy, did not design to satirize any great Man of that Age; yet a great Man in *France*, at that Time, took it to himself, and fancied the Author had taken him as a Model for one of the principal, and one of the worst Charac-ters in that Comedy. By good Luck he was not the Licenser, otherwise the Kingdom of *France* had never had the Pleasure, the Hap-piness I may say, of seeing that Play acted; but when the Players first proposed to act it at

at *Paris*, he had Interest enough to get it forbid.—*Moliere*, who knew himself innocent of what was laid to his Charge, complained to his Patron, the Prince of *Conti*, that as his Play was design'd only to expose Hypocrify, and a false Pretence to Religion, 'twas very hard it should be forbid being acted, when, at the same Time, they were suffer'd to expose Religion itself every Night publickly upon the *Italian* Stage: To which the Prince wittily answer'd ; “ 'Tis true, *Moliere*, “ *Harlequin* ridicules Heaven, and exposes “ Religion ; but you have done much worse, “ ---you have ridicul'd the first Minister of “ Religion.”

I am as much for restraining the Licentiousness of the Stage, and every other Sort of Licentiousness, as any of your L—d—ps can be ; but, my L—s, I am, I shall always be extremely cautious and fearful of making the least Incroachment upon Liberty ; and therefore, when a new Law is proposed against Licentiousness, I shall always be for considering it maturely and deliberately, before I venture to give my Consent to its being pass'd.—This is a sufficient Reason for my

my being against passing this Bill at so unseasonable a Time, and in so extraordinary a Manner; but I have many Reasons for being against passing the Bill itself, some of which I shall beg Leave to explain to your L---d---s.

— The Bill, my L---s, at first View, may seem to be design'd only against the Stage, but to me it plainly appears to point somewhere else.—It is an Arrow that does but glance at the Stage; the mortal Wound seems design'd against the Liberty of the Press.—By this Bill you prevent a Play's being acted, but you do not prevent its being printed; therefore, if a Licence should be refused for its being acted, we may depend on it, the Play will be printed.—It will be printed and published, my L---s, with the Refusal in Capital Letters on the Title Page.—People are always fond of what's forbidden.—*Libri prohibiti* are in all Countries diligently and generally sought after.—It will be much easier to procure a Refusal, than it ever was to procure a good House, or a good Sale; therefore we may expect that Plays will be wrote on Purpose to have a Refusal;

fusal ; this will certainly procure a good Sale. Thus will Satires be spread and dispers'd through the whole Nation, and thus every Man in the Kingdom may, and probably will, read for Sixpence, what a few only could have seen acted, and that not under the Expence of Half-a-Crown.---We shall then be told,---What ! will you allow an infamous Libel to be printed and dispers'd, which you would not allow to be acted ? You have agreed to a Law for preventing its being acted ; can you refuse your Assent to a Law for preventing its being printed and published ? I should really, my L---s, be glad to hear what Excuse, what Reason one could give for being against the Latter, after having agreed to the Former ; for I protest I cannot suggest the least Shadow for an Excuse.---If we agree to the Bill now before us, we must perhaps, next Session, agree to a Bill for preventing any Plays being *printed* without a Licence.---Thus, my L---s, from the Precedent now before us, we shall be induced, nay, we can find no Reason for refusing, to *lay the Press under a general Licence*,

cence, and then we may bid adieu to the Liberties of *Great-Britain*.

But suppose, my L---s, it were necessary to make a new Law for restraining the Licensiousness of the Stage, which I am very far from granting, yet I shall never be for establishing such a Power as is proposed by this Bill.---If Poets and Players are to be restrain'd, as other Subjects are, by the known Laws of their Country; if they offend, let *them be tried, as every Englishman ought to be, by God and their Country.* --- Do not let us subject them to the arbitrary Will and Pleasure of any one Man.—A *Power* lodged in the Hands of one *single Man*, to *judge* and *determine* without Limitation, without any Controul or Appeal, is a Sort of Power unknown to our Laws, *inconsistent* with our *\* Constitution*; it is a higher, a more absolute Power, than we trust even to the King himself; and, therefore I must think we ought not to vest any such Power in his Majesty's L—d Ch——n.—When I say this, I am sure, I do not mean to give the least, the most

\* Have not J—st—s of the P—ce too much of this enormous Power? Has not such Power been granted 'em of late Years?

most distant Offence to the noble D—, who now fills the Post of L—d Ch——n ; his natural Candour and Love of Justice, would not, I know, permit him to exercise any Power, but with the strictest Regard to the Rules of Justice and Humanity.—Were we sure his Successors in high Office would always be Persons of such distinguished Merit, even the Power to be established by this Bill could give me no further Alarm, than lest it should be made a Precedent for introducing other new Powers of the same Nature.—This indeed is an Alarm which cannot be prevented by any Hope, by any Consideration :—It is an Alarm which, I think, every Man must take, who has a due Regard to the Constitution and Liberties of his Country.

I shall admit, my L---s, that the Stage ought not, upon any Occasion, to meddle with Politics, and for this very Reason, among the Rest, I am against the Bill now before us.—This Bill will be so far from preventing the Stage's meddling with Politics, that I fear it will be the Occasion of meddling with nothing else ; but then it will be a political Stage *Ex Parte*.—It will be made

subservient to the Politics and Schemes of the Court only.—The Licentiousness of the Stage will be encouraged instead of being restrained ; but, like Court Journalists, it would be licentious only against the Patrons of Liberty, and the Protectors of the People. —— Whatever Man, whatever Party opposes the Court, in any their most destructive Schemes, will, upon the Stage, be represented in the most ridiculous Light the Hirelings of a Court can contrive. True Patriotism, and Love of public Good, will be represented as Madness, or as a Cloke for Envy, Disappointment, and Malice, whilst the most flagitious Crimes, the most extravagant Vices and Follies, if they are fashionable at Court, will be disguised and dressed up in the Habit of the most amiable Virtues.

This has formerly been the Case. ---- In King *Charles II's.* Days, the Play-house was under a Licence, what was the Consequence? ---- The Play-house retailed nothing but the Politics, the Vices, and the Follies of a Court : Not to expose them ; no—but to recommend them ; tho', it must be granted, their

their Politicks were often as bad as their Vices, and much more pernicious than their other Follies. — 'Tis true, the Court had, at that Time, a great deal of Wit, it was then indeed, full of Men of true Wit and Humour, but it was the more dangerous ; for the Courtiers did then, as thorough-paced Courtiers always will do, they sacrificed their Honour, by making their Wit and Humour subservient to the Court only ; and what made it still more dangerous, no Man could appear against them. — We know that *Dryden*, the Poet-Laureat of that Reign, always represents the Cavaliers as honest, brave, merry Fellows, and fine Gentlemen : Indeed, his fine Gentleman, as he generally draws him, is an atheistical, lewd, abandoned Fellow, which was at that Time, it seems, the fashionable Character at Court. — On the other Hand, he always represents the Dissenters as hypocritical, dissembling Rogues, or stupid senseless Boobies. — When the Court had a Mind to fall out with the *Dutch*, he wrote his *Amboyna*, in which he represents the *Dutch* as a Pack of avaricious, cruel, ungrateful Rascals : — And

when the Exclusion Bill was moved in Parliament, he wrote his Duke of *Guise*, in which those who were for preserving, and securing the Religion of their Country, were exposed under the Character of the Duke of *Guise*, and his Party, who leagued together, for excluding *Henry IV. of France* from the Throne, on the Account of his Religion.

— The City of *London* was made to feel the partial and mercenary Licentiousness of the Stage at that Time ; for the Citizens having at that Time, as well as now, a great deal of Property, they had a Mind to preserve that Property, and therefore they opposed some of the arbitrary Measures, which were then begun, but pursued more openly in the following Reign ; for which Reason, they were then always represented upon the Stage, as a Parcel of designing Knaves, dissembling Hypocrites, griping Usurers, and — Cuckolds into the Bargain.

My L——ds, the proper Business of the Stage, and that for which it is only useful, is to expose those Vices and Follies, which  
the

the Laws cannot lay hold of, and to recommend those Beauties and Virtues, which Ministers or Courtiers seldom imitate or reward ; but by laying it under a Licence, and under an arbitrary Court Licence too, you will, in my Opinion, entirely pervert it's Use ; for tho' I have the greatest Esteem for that noble D—— in whose Hands this Power is at present designed to fall, tho' I have an entire Confidence in his Judgment and Impartiality ; yet I may suppose that a Leaning towards the Fashions of a Court is sometimes hard to be avoided. ---- It may be difficult to make one, who is every Day at Court, believe that to be a Vice or Folly, which he sees daily practised by those he loves and esteems. —— By Custom, even Deformity itself becomes familiar, and at last agreeable. —— To such a Person ; let his natural Impartiality be ever so great, that may appear to be a Libel against the Court, which is only a most just and a most necessary Satire upon the fashionable Vices and Follies of the Court. — Courtiers, my L—s, are too polite to reprove one another ; the

only Place where they can meet with any just Reproof, is a free, tho' not a licentious Stage ; and as every Sort of Folly, generally in all Countries, begins at Court, and from thence spreads thro' the Country,---- by laying the Stage under an arbitrary Court Licence, instead of leaving it what it is, and always ought to be, a gentle Scourge for the Vices of great Men and Courtiers, you will make it a Canal for propagating and conveying their Vices and Follies thro' the whole Kingdom.

From hence, my L—s, I think, it must appear that the Bill now before us, cannot be so properly a Bill for restraining Licentiousness, as it may be called a Bill for restraining the Liberty of the Stage, and restraining it too in that Branch, which in all Countries has been the most useful ; therefore I must look on the Bill as a most dangerous Incroachment upon Liberty, likewise an Incroachment on Property : Wit, my L---s, is a Sort of Property : It is the Property of those that have it, and too often the only Property they have to depend on.— It is, indeed, but a precarious Dependance.

— Thank

— Thank God ! we ---- my L----s, have a Dependance of another Kind ; we have a much less precarious Support, and therefore cannot feel the Inconveniences of the Bill now before us ; but it is our Duty to encourage and protect Wit, whosoever's Property it may be. ---- Those Gentlemen who have any such Property, are all, I hope, our Friends : Do not let us subject them to any unnecessary or arbitrary Restraint. — I must own I cannot easily agree to the laying of any Tax upon Wit ; but by this Bill it is to be heavily taxed ; it is to be excised ; for if this Bill passes, it cannot be retailed in a proper Way without a Permit ; and the L—d Ch—n is to have the Honour of being chief Gauger, Supervisor, Commissioner, Judge and Jury : But what is still more hard, tho' the poor Author, the Proprietor I should say, cannot perhaps dine till he has found out a Purchaser, yet, before he can propose to seek for a Purchaser, he must patiently submit to have his Goods rummaged at this *New Excise Office*, where they may be detained fourteen Days, and even then he may find them returned as prohibited Goods, by which his chief

chief and best Market will be for ever shut against him ; and that without any Cause, without the least Shadow of Reason, either from the Laws of his Country, or the Laws of the Stage.

These Hardships, this Hazard, which every Gentleman will be exposed to, who writes any Thing for the Stage, must certainly prevent every Man of a generous and free Spirit from attempting any thing in that Way ; and as the Stage has always been the proper Channel for Wit and Humour, therefore, my L—s, when I speak against this Bill, I must think I plead the Cause of Wit, I plead the Cause of Humour, I plead the Cause of the *British* Stage, and of every Gentleman of Taste in the Kingdom : But it is not, my L---s, for the Sake of Wit only, even for the Sake of his Majesty's L---d Ch ---- n, I must be against this Bill. ---- The noble D --- e, who has now the Honour to execute that Office, has, I am sure, as little Inclination to disoblige as any Man ; but if this Bill passes, he must disoblige, he may disoblige some of his most intimate Friends.----It is impossible to write a Play, but some

some of the Characters, or some of the Satire, may be interpreted to point at some Person or another, perhaps at some Person in an eminent Station : When it comes to be acted, the People will make the Application, and the Person against whom the Application is made, will think himself injured, and will, at least privately, resent it : At present this Resentment can be directed only against the Author, but when an Author's Play appears with my Lord Ch ---- n's Passport, every such Resentment will be turned from the Author, and pointed directly against the L --- d Ch----n, who, by his Stamp, made the Piece current. — What an unthankful Office are we therefore, by this Bill, to put upon his Majesty's L --- d Ch----n ! an Office which can no Ways contribute to his Honour or Profit, and yet such an one as must necessarily gain him a great deal of Ill-will, and create him a Number of Enemies. ---- The last Reason I shall trouble your L --- s with for my being against the Bill, is, that, in my Opinion, it will no Way answer the End proposed : I mean the End,

End openly proposed, and I am sure the only End which your Lordships propose. — To prevent the Acting of a Play, that has any Tendency to Blasphemy, Immorality, Sedition, or private Scandal, can signify nothing, unless you can likewise prevent its being printed and published. — On the contrary, if you prevent its being acted, and admit of its being printed and published, you will propagate the Mischief: Your Prohibition will prove a Bellows, which will blow up the Fire you intend to extinguish. — This Bill can therefore be of no Use for preventing either the public, or the private Injury, intended by such a Play; and consequently can be of no Manner of Use, unless it be designed as a Precedent, as a leading Step, towards another, for subjecting the Press likewise to a Licenser. — For such a wicked Purpose it may indeed be of great Use; and in that Light, it may most properly be called a Step towards arbitrary Power.

Let us consider, my L — ds, that arbitrary Power has seldom or never been introduced into any Country at once; it must be introduced by slow Degrees, and, as it were, Step by

by Step, lest the People should perceive its Approach. — The Barriers and Fences of the Peoples Liberty must be plucked up one by one, and some plausible Pretences must be found for removing, or Hood-winking, one after another, those Sentries who are posted, by the Constitution of every free Country, to warn the People of their Danger. — When these preparatory Steps are once made, the People may then indeed, with Regret, see Slavery and arbitrary Power making long Strides over their Land ; but it will then be too late to think of avoiding, or preventing the impending Ruin. — The Stage, my L --- s, and the Press, are two of our Out-Sentries ; if we remove them, if we Hood-wink them, — the Enemy may surprise us. — Therefore I must look upon the Bill now before us as a Step, and a most necessary Step too, for introducing arbitrary Power into this Kingdom : It is a Step so necessary, that if ever any future ambitious K --- g, or guilty Minister, should form to himself so wicked a Design, he will have Reason to thank us for having done so much

of the Work to his Hand ; but such Thanks, or Thanks from such a Man, I am convinced every one of your L—s would blush to receive, — and scorn to deserve.

And then the B—ll passed.



July 1. 1756.

TO THE

## P U B L I C.

*Ad Decus, et Libertatem, aut Nati Sumus; hoc teneamus,  
aut cum dignitate moriamur.* CICERO.

OPPRESSED and overpowered as I am, by the wicked Influence of some present avaritious theatrical Tyrants, — I have taken (*as appears in the APPENDIX to my DISSESSATIONS*) every decent and proper Step to obtain a Licence, to get *my Bread by my Profession*, in my *native Country*; --- that I have it not, will probably appear, to *every honest Englishman*, a very *extraordinary Hardship*, --- considering the Reasonableness and Justice of my Request: And that the same Sort of *Licence* which I prayed in vain for, has *often* been *granted*, nay, *never refused*, to *any Company of French Strollers, or other Foreigners*, that thought it worth their while to apply for it: --- But as I find that neither Reason, Humanity, or Justice, have yet been able to prevail, in my Behalf, against the surprising Influence of some certain all-powerful Patentees, --- I have applied to the Learned in the Law, --- in Consequence of whose Advice, and in Obedience

dience to the supreme Laws of Nature, I am determined to enter into Trade ; which I hope will enable me and my Partners, &c. to entertain our Friends and Customers frequently with the REHEARSAL of a MORAL PLAY, *without Gain, Hire, or Reward.*

In this justifiable Scheme, every encouraging Circumstance emboldens me to hope Success; as no gigantic, overstrained Stroke of Power can possibly reach me, or my Partners in Trade, but what must first *strike through* the very *Heart of Liberty, Humanity, and Justice*: Nor is it possible that I should fail of finding a warm Friend, in every disinterested, honest, humane Heart. --- Notwithstanding the supreme Laws of Nature are so full, and clear, in my Behalf, I will carefully avoid doing any Thing against the Letter of any *British Law*; I honour my *King*, and *love my Country*: And, whatever *Hardships* I may have suffered, I never will do any Thing that can be construed an *Offence* to either; and in that honest Confidence I shal proceed --- undreading the Iron Hand of unjust Oppression.







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